

Common Ground

An Institute of Ethnic Democracy

John Collier and Saul K. Padover

RACE TENSIONS: SECOND PHASE

Carey McWilliams

PRELUDE TO DISASTER: DETROIT Louis Martin

PACHUCOS IN THE MAKING George I. Sanchez

GROWING OUT OF SHADOW Margaret Walker

GROWING INTO FREEDOM Lillian E. Smith

THE PRACTICE OF CITIZENSHIP

Archibald MacLeish

OUR HUMILIATION—NOT THEIRS Bruno Lasker

——— *and others* ———

50c.

AUTUMN 1943

This War Will Be Won by Faith in Democracy
Help Keep That Faith Strong

GIVE *Common Ground* TO THE BOYS IN THE SERVICE

Soldiers, too, like to read. Army camp libraries want magazines. Help us see that COMMON GROUND reaches the boys in service.


A gift subscription of COMMON GROUND to a camp library—or to a soldier—is one way of helping spread democracy's war aims. "It's more important now than ever before to maintain a practical idealism," writes one soldier. "Let us strengthen our democracy to meet the crucial days ahead."

Here are three ways you can help—

1. If you have a relative or friend in the Army, enter a subscription directly for him.
2. If there is an Army camp in your vicinity, subscribe for the camp library or USO Center.
3. If you wish, send an undesignated subscription. We'll pick a camp that is not receiving COMMON GROUND and notify you which one you've "adopted."

Here are COMMON GROUND's "special" rates for gift subscriptions to Army camps or men in the service—

One subscription	\$2
Additional subscriptions	\$1.50 each

Use the Attached Card for Ordering 

COMMON GROUND. Published quarterly: September, December, March, June, by Common Council for American Unity. \$2.00 a year; 50 cents a copy. Copyright 1943, by Common Council for American Unity, Incorporated. Printed at the Princeton University Press. Editorial and publication office, 222 Fourth Avenue, New York, 3, New York. Manuscripts must be accompanied by stamped, self-addressed envelopes. Entered as second-class matter September 15, 1940, at the post office at New York, New York, under the Act of March 3, 1879.

CONTENTS

TITLE	AUTHOR	PAGE
AN INSTITUTE OF ETHNIC DEMOCRACY	John Collier and Saul K. Padover	3
RACE TENSIONS: SECOND PHASE	Carey McWilliams	7
PACHUCOS IN THE MAKING	George I. Sanchez	13
PRELUDE TO DISASTER: DETROIT	Louis Martin	21
WE GO ON FROM HERE	D'Arcy McNickle	26
THE FIRST DAY	George and Helen Papashvily	32
TOGETHER WE TEST OUR COURAGE	Marjorie McKenzie	37
GROWING OUT OF SHADOW	Margaret Walker	42
GROWING INTO FREEDOM	Lillian E. Smith	47
THE AMERICAN WAY	Photographs	53
THE PRACTICE OF CITIZENSHIP	Archibald MacLeish	61
THE FLYING AFRICANS	Kenneth Porter	67
OUR HUMILIATION—NOT THEIRS	Bruno Lasker	71
CITIZEN KWONG	Carl Glick	77
PORTRAIT OF PAPA	Fotine Zirpiades	80
IS THIS AMERICA SPEAKING?	Congress, Press, and Platform	86
PULLING THE TURNIP	Leta Browne	88
PASSOVER AND AMERICANS IN THE PACIFIC	Henry A. Davidson	91
THE FOURTH—SOMEWHERE IN THE PACIFIC	Arthur D. Williams	93
THE NEGRO PRESS ON THE RIOTS	A Digest of Opinion	101
THE FINNISH IMMIGRANT <i>Nyikkilehti</i>	John I. Kolehmainen	105

DEPARTMENTS

Miscellany, 96 The Immigrant and Negro Press, 101

Motion Pictures of the Quarter, conducted by Ezra Goodman, 94

The Bookshelf, conducted by Henry C. Tracy, 107

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

M. MARGARET ANDERSON
Editor

ALEXANDER ALLAND
Photo Editor

FRANK MLAKAR
Assistant Editor
In the armed forces

EDDIE SHIMANO
ROSE WILLIAMS
Assistants

ADVISORY EDITORIAL BOARD

LOUIS ADAMIC
VAN WYCK BROOKS
PEARL BUCK

MARY ELLEN CHASE
LANGSTON HUGHES

ALVIN JOHNSON
THOMAS MANN
LIN YUTANG

COMMON GROUND is published by the COMMON COUNCIL FOR AMERICAN UNITY, 222 Fourth Avenue, New York City, 3, as one part of its program to accomplish the following purposes:

To help create among the American people the unity and mutual understanding resulting from a common citizenship, a common belief in democracy and the ideals of liberty, the placing of the common good before the interests of any group, and the acceptance, in fact as well as in law, of all citizens, whatever their national or racial origins, as equal partners in American society.

To further an appreciation of what each group has contributed to America, to uphold the freedom to be different, and to encourage the growth of an American culture which will be truly representative of all the elements that make up the American people.

To overcome intolerance and discrimination because of foreign birth or descent, race or nationality.

To help the foreign-born and their children solve their special problems of adjustment, know and value their particular cultural heritage, and share fully and constructively in American life.

The work of the Council is supported by memberships and contributions: Subscribing Membership, \$3; Participating, \$5; Co-operating, \$10; Contributing, \$25; Supporting, \$50; Sustaining, \$100 and over. All memberships include subscription to COMMON GROUND. Subscription to COMMON GROUND alone is \$2.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS: Nicholas Kelley, Chairman; John Palmer Gavit, Will Irwin, Vice-Chairmen; Eliot D. Pratt, Treasurer; Louis Adamic, Sigurd J. Arnesen, Edward Fisher Brown, Allen T. Burns, Fred M. Butzel, Mrs. Thomas Capek, Elizabeth Eastman, Sylvan Gotshal, Earl G. Harrison, James L. Houghteling, Mrs. James A. Kennedy, Robert D. Kohn, Frank J. Lausche, Read Lewis, Mrs. Jacob A. Riis, Josephine Roche, Mrs. DeWitt Stetten, Ida M. Tarbell, and M. F. Wegrzynek.

Read Lewis, Executive Director



AN INSTITUTE OF ETHNIC DEMOCRACY

JOHN COLLIER AND
SAUL K. PADOVER

WE ARE impressed by the tragic failure of the democracies to face the "race" issue domestically and internationally. The democracies, perhaps owing to a guilty conscience, are trying to blink the fact that Hitler, the arch-enemy of mankind, has started a race war on this globe. The arch-enemy began the war with the assertion of the superiority of one so-called race and the inferiority of the rest of mankind. In Europe, he has been systematically exterminating whole peoples whom he considers "inferior"—Poles, Jews, Slovenes, Greeks, Russians—and is hoping to enslave the rest. In the Orient, the Japanese are imitating the Nazis with a vengeance: they are preaching race hatred against the whites. In this country millions of American citizens of dark pigment are sometimes abused, generally despised, and frequently discriminated against. In South America, darker-skinned peoples, especially Indians, are stirring with resentment against the stigma of inferiority. In Africa, colonial peoples hate their white masters and will throw off the yoke when the opportunity arises. Everywhere race prejudice is endemic.

We are convinced that race and "minority" questions are one of the basic issues of our time. We believe that if this

problem is not solved it will wreck our democracy. As Congresswoman Frances P. Bolton said: "If we cannot change our attitude about race, we are going to bring upon the heads of our children . . . a cataclysm." We know that without the establishment of a genuine equality of opportunity for all peoples there can be no lasting peace in the world. Upon this rock of race prejudice and race arrogance, Pearl Buck warned, "all peoples may divide into the ultimate enmity." We fear she may be right.

Although the race question is global, we are, in this instance, concerned with the United States. Here the problem is difficult and dangerous. For, with the exception of the Soviet Union and India, we are the only major country in the world that contains large bodies of diverse peoples and races. The Soviet Union has solved its racial and ethnic problem wisely—by preaching and practising genuine equality of opportunity for all its citizens, regardless of their color or racial origin. We have done little in this direction.

It should be stressed that our national origins have been mixed and that this country was built by immigrants, as President Roosevelt reminded the D.A.R. in April 1938. The first United States Cen-

COMMON GROUND

sus, that of 1790, showed the population to consist of about 89 per cent Anglo-Scottish, 5.6 per cent German, 2.5 per cent Dutch, nearly 2 per cent Irish. But these proportions have undergone a drastic change. Throughout the 19th century and the early part of the 20th, there came to this country tens of millions of immigrants who were not English or Scottish. They came, and continued to be absorbed, from Austria and Russia and Italy and Poland and Bulgaria and Greece and Serbia and Hungary and Lithuania. In other words, except linguistically, the United States cannot be considered an Anglo-Saxon country. It is truly a new world—America—a mosaic of ethnic strains and peoples. Our daily military casualty list contains such names as Kwiatkowski, O'Brien, Papadopoulos, Goldberg, Mueller, Di Angelo—names descriptive of the diverse origin of their fathers.

To be specific, there are in the United States today 32,000,000 white Americans of foreign birth or descent (one or both foreign-born parents). These include 7,000,000 of Slavic and 4,500,000 of Italian descent, to list but two major groups. Sixteen per cent of our total population speaks a foreign mother tongue (about 4,000,000 Italian, around 2,400,000 Polish, nearly 2,000,000 Spanish, and 1,750,000 Yiddish). We have also some 13,000,000 Negroes and 600,000 Indians and Asiatics.

These millions of new Americans are not fully accepted in American life. Their status varies considerably, with Negroes everywhere at the bottom of the scale. Regardless of our political democracy, we must admit that in practice, therefore, tens of millions of Americans enjoy—if one can use that term—second- or third-class citizenship. These disadvantaged Americans do not like their status. In view of the promise of American life, and

the democratic idealism upon which it is built, they will probably not remain passive, being Americans.

If a wise democratic solution is not found, one may expect that trouble will pile up on our heads. Quiet discrimination breeds quiet resentment, which for all its covertness runs deep. But overt action is not uncommon. There is trouble almost every day, although it is not always publicized. Negro workers are attacked in Alabama. Negro homes are wrecked in Texas. Mexicans are beaten up in California. In Detroit the recent race rioting reached such proportions as to constitute a humiliating national defeat. What many of our people do not seem to realize is that an attack upon any one group of Americans is an attack upon the unity and integrity of the whole United States.

If things are permitted to drift this way, then Hitler has won the war, at least within the United States. Nazi propaganda has fanned, and is continuing to fan, all the latent racial and religious animosities that prevail in this country—hatred of Negroes, of Mexicans, of the British, of liberals, of Jews, and of Catholics. And the question is: what are we going to do about it? Are we countering the Nazi poison (which works upon a body politic that is strongly susceptible to it) with the proper anti-toxins? Are we building up resistance? Are we creating a positive democratic program?

President Roosevelt, although busy with the conduct of the war, has done some things. He has issued frequent protests against discrimination. He has formed the Committee on Fair Employment Practice. He has requested the insertion of anti-discrimination clauses in government contracts. These are important steps, and deserve praise. But more, much more, needs to be done.

AN INSTITUTE OF ETHNIC DEMOCRACY

II

First of all, we need a policy. The government must have a clearly formulated, far-sighted, courageous "minorities" and race policy. It must have democratic goals and pursue democratic ends. Hush-hush techniques, within a situation so grave, can only be insulting to Americans and to the democratic traditions of our country. Besides, experience has shown that lukewarm action is not going to do any good, anyhow. Negroes, for one, are tired of "gradualism."

There is another reason why such a policy is needed. At present the United States administers a number of overseas possessions—Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and some lesser islands. In all of these possessions there are non-white peoples. About half the resident population of Alaska consists of Indians and Aleuts. In Puerto Rico, about one-quarter of the population is classed as Negro. In the Virgin Islands, it is nearly all Negro. In Hawaii, there is an interesting (and harmonious) mixture of races, native Hawaiians, Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, etc. Nor should we forget the Philippine Islands, with their 16,000,000 non-white inhabitants. After the war, the Philippine Commonwealth, although independent, will still have important ties—cultural, emotional, linguistic, and economic—with the United States, and a definite policy will be called for.

Hitherto we have had no "colonial" policy. Just as the acquisition of our overseas possessions was casual and unpremeditated, so our administration was haphazard and unplanned. Like Topsy, our "colonial" policy just grewed, without plan or purpose. Although generally negative, it was fair, as a rule, because our administrators were decent people. But basic problems remained unsolved, even

unenvisioned, and they are still crying for formulation and solution.

One other consideration. There is a real possibility that when the present war is over, the United States will find itself having custody over new islands and territories. Willy-nilly, our government may be called upon to administer overseas areas in the form of mandates or leases or treaty-defined possessions. In any case, the Stars and Stripes will probably be flying over alien, primitive, and colored peoples. To speak bluntly, except for general good intentions, we are not prepared for any such administration, because we have neither clear policy nor skilled administrators.

For all of these reasons we therefore believe that it would be desirable for the United States government to set up an

INSTITUTE OF ETHNIC DEMOCRACY

(We use the term "ethnic" because it is more colorless, less weighted with emotion, than "racial," "minority," or "colonial.") Such an institute should serve as a clearing house, a research body, and a stimulating and co-ordinating agency on all matters relating to "minorities" and race problems. It need not concern itself with administration. The program, in part, would be as follows:

1. The Institute shall set up an information and research agency relating to ethnic affairs. Its library shall include books, articles, reports, special studies on interracial relations, ethnic problems, "minorities" problems, "colonial" policies and administration, and similar subjects. Works dealing with American experience are to be stressed, but relevant foreign works shall be given importance. Its staff of investigators shall be composed of men and women skilled and experienced in the various phases of the work.

2. The Institute shall establish a working relationship, by consultation and cor-

COMMON GROUND

respondence, with governmental and non-governmental agencies and institutions, for the exchange of data and information, as well as the interchange of ideas and suggestions.

3. The Institute shall publish and procure the publication of results of its work. A weekly, or monthly, digest of all that is being done and thought and planned in the ethnic field—both by governmental and non-governmental agencies—might be undertaken as a beginning. Releases may be given out to the press through the usual channels. Methods of dramatic and graphic communication shall be favored.

4. The Institute shall, whenever advantageous, arrange educational and planning conferences with persons and groups working in the field of ethnic affairs, and help organize community programs.

5. The Institute shall draw up plans for the training of civilian administrators in democratic administration. The training shall be an enterprise of research and experimentation at the same time.

6. The Institute shall organize a pool of specialists (with experience in ethnic and overseas administration and problems) to be available for consultation with or lectures to other agencies and communities that may need them.

In general, the Institute shall serve as a reservoir of information and as a stimulating and advisory agency on all matters relating to ethnic affairs. It shall seek to focus for the exploration of the ethnic problems, and for public and specialist information concerning them, all of the thought and energy which can be assembled.

Such an Institute might well be placed within the Department of the Interior. That Department already administers, democratically, one important minority—Indians—as well as our Islands and Territories. Secretary Ickes is known as a fight-

ing liberal of vision and courage, and this is a job that will require both vision and courage.

III

Specifically, what would such an Institute accomplish? Its importance is long-range, rather than immediate. Unless it had been in existence for some time previous to June 1943, it could have made no difference in the Detroit race riots, since tensions had been accumulating there for years, and, in the absence of a program of democratic social engineering, an explosion was bound to occur. One of the functions of the Institute would be precisely this—to survey tension areas and to prevent explosions. This means long-range planning and thinking.

Moreover, the Institute would have close contact with groups, agencies, and individuals working on race and ethnic problems in various communities. In case of trouble, actual or expected, it would send skilled investigators to report and then work out—in co-operation with the local groups and agencies—a program for harmonious relations.

Essentially, however, the long-run aim of the Institute would be preventive, that is, it would develop such programs of action—educational and institutional—that disgraceful race clashes and humiliating race discriminations would not occur in the future. This would take time, wisdom, and patience, but systematic education and enlightenment probably offer the only real hope of ultimate success in this field. Action by government decree (assuming that we will always have a liberal administration, which is too much of an assumption) would almost certainly be defeated on the rock of the present state of public opinion. In this connection it is illuminating to quote the opinion of Thomas Jefferson, our most far-sighted and practical

AN INSTITUTE OF ETHNIC DEMOCRACY

democratic statesman. During his first month as President he told a friend:

"I am sensible how far I should fall short of effecting all the reformation which reason would suggest, and experience approve, were I free to do whatever I thought best; but when we reflect how difficult it is to move or inflect the great machine of society, how impossible to advance the notions of a whole people suddenly to ideal right, we see the wisdom of Solon's remark, that no more good must be attempted than the nation can bear."

At least we can attempt that good. The Institute would serve as the agency help-

ing in the ultimate establishment of what Jefferson called the "ideal right."

John Collier is United States Commissioner of Indian Affairs. Saul K. Padover is Assistant to the Secretary of the Interior and author of the recent biography, Jefferson, published by Harcourt, Brace in 1942.

Both men stress the fact that they are writing here as private individuals and not as government officials. "Any similarity between our ideas and existing, or non-existing, government policy," they say, "is purely coincidental."

RACE TENSIONS: SECOND PHASE

CAREY McWILLIAMS

THE DEVELOPMENT of race tension in the United States is now rapidly passing into a new and fairly distinct phase. Up to January 1, 1943, race friction had steadily increased; but since then friction has changed to tension, and tension, in turn, to aggressions of unmistakable seriousness upon colored groups in this country.

The verbal exhortations and makeshift expedients of the earlier, or friction, period, have not much applicability to the present emergency. For what makes the new phase particularly dangerous is that reaction is now consciously seeking to take the initiative from the democratic forces on this, as on most other, issues related to the war. "Reaction always crystallizes," as Claude Williams recently observed, "in direct proportion to the effectiveness of the challenge to the status quo by progressive forces." The Detroit,

Beaumont, Los Angeles, and Harlem riots clearly indicate the existence, in each case, of an unmistakably reactionary pattern. Reaction is obviously determined to prevent further concessions to colored Americans, and also to exploit race tension for its own purposes.

The report of Judge William H. Hastie to the National Lawyers Guild serves to illustrate the drift of events. Judge Hastie points out that five Negro soldiers were killed or wounded during the first three months of this year through assaults upon them in civilian communities. The situation here presented is not friction incident to changing relationships, but of overt and serious assaults upon members of a colored group. The attacks themselves are a direct outgrowth of a series of more or less tentative assaults against Negro soldiers which took place during 1941 and 1942. The fact that swift

COMMON GROUND

official reprisals were not forthcoming at the time merely encouraged civilian riff-raff elements to make attacks of a more serious character. Judge Hastie correctly appraises the situation when he notes in the report that "both the seriousness of this form of lawlessness and the lack of any effective methods of control have become more important and increasingly grave in their implications."

The fight which Negroes have been making on the West Coast to outlaw Jim-Crow locals in the shipyards is still a further indication that the struggle for racial equality has entered a new phase. Negro shipyard workers are not merely "protesting" discrimination: they are in open rebellion against it. The principal union involved has been turning their names in to the management for non-payment of dues and, in accordance with existing contracts, has been demanding their discharge. But the Negroes will not continue to pay dues in the union as long as they are segregated in Jim-Crow locals. Here a clear-cut issue has been joined in such a manner that the federal government can scarcely avoid a direct decision of a most fundamental character. The case is of more than passing significance because of the determination which Negroes have shown. This determination is itself a sign of the times.

The way in which anti-Oriental prejudice is being artificially stimulated and carefully organized on the West Coast is another illustration of the same trend. Prior to January 1, 1943, there had been little recent artificial stimulation of this old issue. But since the first of the year, reactionary groups have been organizing a systematic assault upon Orientals on the Coast. Since virtually all those of Japanese descent have been removed from the area, this aggression has taken the form of what Max Lerner calls "psychic imperialism," but the significance of what

is happening is not to be minimized because of this fact. For it is becoming apparent that anti-Oriental feeling is being deliberately organized for partisan political purposes.

In view of the key importance of California in the 1944 campaign, it is quite likely that the Republicans may nominate Governor Earl Warren for Vice-President. If Warren should be nominated, I predict he will attempt to swing California into the Republican column by making a direct issue of the "Japanese problem." There is also reason to believe that the Hearst press has been deliberately playing up existing race tension in the country to create division within the Democratic Party. Certainly there is no doubt that anti-Oriental feeling in California is being artificially cultivated for the purpose of directing public opinion—to the right. By and large, the anti-Oriental resolutions being adopted all over the state can be traced back to not more than four or five key organizations. It is significant that these resolutions are more or less identical in phrasing, and are always presented to organizations for concurrence rather than having arisen spontaneously within particular groups.

New racist pressure groups have recently been organized in the state, such as the Pacific Problems Study Group and the Home Front Commandos, Inc., of Sacramento (which last-named organization is flooding California with racist pamphlets and throwaways). The chief financial supporter of this curious organization is Mr. C. M. Goethe of Sacramento. Several times a millionaire, Mr. Goethe is the founder of the Eugenics Society of Northern California, formerly an active member of the Sacramento Council of Churches, and currently the public relations director for the Northern California Council of Churches. In making remittances to the Home Front Com-

RACE TENSIONS: SECOND PHASE

mandos, Mr. Goethe is always careful to request that no use be made of his name. He is also one of the chief financial supporters of the California Joint Immigration Committee—the main source of anti-Oriental propaganda in California today.

Aided by these and other organizations, the Costello sub-committee of the Dies Committee has recently demonstrated how effectively popular hatred of Japan can, by a crude kind of political ambivalence, be transferred to some 70,000 American citizens of Japanese ancestry. Since the appeal to hatred is made strictly in racist terms, the effect is to heighten race tension in general. It should also be noted that, in this movement, one can detect a self-conscious effort to make the anti-Oriental agitation a part of the war effort. That is, groups and individuals are repeatedly told that certain measures must be taken against the resident Japanese as a part of the war effort—as a means of winning the war. This type of propaganda is spreading eastward, as evidenced by the following comment from an editorial in a recent issue of the *Detroit News*: “The more we are obliged to look into the nature of the Jap as revealed in this war, the more we incline to wonder what is the highest common divisor of the races of mankind, to what degree we are really brothers under the skin.”

It is interesting to compare the recent “hearings” of the Costello sub-committee (so-called in derogation of Mr. Dies because of the circumstance that Mr. Costello intends to be a candidate for United States Senator in 1944) with the first Congressional inquiry into the Oriental problem on the West Coast. At this initial inquiry in 1876, it was apparent from the testimony that most Californians were firmly convinced (a) that all Chinese were untrustworthy and (b) that no Chinese

person was to be believed under oath. No one in California today—with the possible exception of former Attorney General U. S. Webb—will repeat these old calumnies against the Chinese; but there is general public acquiescence in the same charges when directed at Japanese Americans. The exemption of the Chinese, however, is really more a matter of courtesy than of belief. A minor purpose of the current furore about the Japanese Americans, for instance, is to defeat the legislation now pending in Congress designed to relax the immigration laws on behalf of the Chinese. While local racist pressure groups do not, at the moment, dare inveigh in public against the Chinese, they can create such a general excitement over the Japanese that people will conclude, as they are concluding, that “now is no time to tamper with the immigration laws.” “White supremacy” may again become a major political war cry in California. It can be readily demonstrated in most cases that the pressure groups now operating are as violently opposed to Negroes and Chinese and Filipinos as they are to Japanese, and for the same reasons. Here again, the current anti-Oriental agitation involves, not an instance of race friction, but a calculated, well-financed, and skillfully directed campaign to arouse hatred of colored Americans and, by raising the race issue, swing public opinion to the right.

What the next phase in the development of race tension will be depends, of course, upon many variable and contingent factors. The developments since the first of the year indicate that the immediate prospect is for more trouble. It therefore becomes imperative to attack the entire problem in an organized systematic manner. Preliminary to such an effort, however, there should be thorough-going investigation of the riots

COMMON GROUND

which have occurred this year and of the pressure groups which are operating, so that the people can be made to realize there are groups in existence which seek to organize racial animosities and latent prejudices for selfish political or economic purposes. Once such a demonstration has been made, it should then be possible to point up a curative program.

For such a program, we must have, first of all, as John Collier and Saul K. Padover say elsewhere in these pages, a policy—"a clearly formulated, farsighted, courageous 'minorities' and race policy." I pointed out in *Brothers Under the Skin* that our first assignment is "to establish the principle that, as a *matter of national policy*, there shall be no discrimination against individuals because of race, color, creed, or country of national origin. Such a statement seems innocuous; but it is the crux of the matter. For once such a national policy has been proclaimed (and we have already attempted to do so), then it can be implemented in a limitless variety of ways." Once we have such a policy clearly enunciated, we can forge ahead with the twin tools of the educational, advisory, and trouble-shooting Bureau of Ethnic Democracy proposed by Mr. Collier and Mr. Padover, and of legislative enforcement of the Bill of Rights. We would have a base from which to operate in the passage of a Fair Racial Practice Act, with enforcement in the hands of an administrative agency; for wiping out restrictive covenants, for outlawing the poll tax in federal elections, for eliminating discrimination in industry and trade unions, for removing racism from our immigration policy, for pushing forward generally with the unfinished business of democracy.

In bringing about the formulation of such a policy and implementing such a program, much depends, in the immediate

future, upon the extent to which the people themselves will become active and articulate, will counter the organized forces of ill will with organized goodwill. The fact that there will be a Presidential election in 1944 creates more than a suspicion that the Administration cannot be relied upon to take the initiative in launching a counteroffensive against the growth of race tension, or to assert the type of vigorous leadership needed. But the people do not need to wait for the Administration to act; nor are they doing so. Since the first of the year, there has been an enormous increase in the number of interracial committees, of anti-discrimination committees, of so-called "good conduct" committees. Their widespread geographical distribution indicates that the people at the base of American society are themselves beginning to be thoroughly aroused to the dangers inherent in racist propaganda. Extremely important occupational and functional groups have undertaken similar activities. The forthcoming Conference on American Racial and National Unity scheduled for September 11 and 12 in Chicago will probably result in the creation of a nationwide committee that can co-ordinate the activities of local groups and begin to exert national pressure upon the Administration and Congress.

In this whole counteroffensive, the people are of vital importance. In view of the existence of so many potentially hopeful manifestations of intelligence and goodwill, it is important that the people be given a sense of confidence in their ability to achieve what they have undertaken, and a new perspective on the problems of race which will encourage them to redouble their present activities on the local and national level. In the past when Americans came at the problem, it was with a half-hearted, tentative, and dubious approach. The implication had always

RACE TENSIONS: SECOND PHASE

been that the attitudes involved could only be changed by a long-range educational process. Obviously a stronger dynamic must be supplied if people are really to meet the challenge implied in recent aggressions upon racial groups. New perspectives indicate that such a dynamic is already at work. If the immediate outlook is grave, it is largely because so much improvement has already taken place. It is important to recognize that one reason race tension is mounting today is precisely because racial groups have been making important advances toward equality of recent years. The nearer they achieve such equality, the more intense the opposition is likely to become.

What all America needs to know and understand is that our racial problem has never been static. Such profound changes have occurred in the relationships involved that, as a matter of fact, the dimensions of the problem have been basically reduced. The American Negro today is not the American Negro of fifty years ago or even of twenty-five years ago. So much is generally recognized. But what is not so generally recognized is that "we" too are changing and have changed; that our culture is itself undergoing profound modifications. Societal pressures are at work in the world today, as Dr. Odum recently observed, which are making for an integration of all peoples in all areas into a common world culture. If these pressures are at work in the world, we can rest assured they are operative in the United States. We need an action program, therefore, geared to what is really a very dynamic situation. The "edging along" process certainly does not fit the present emergency.

If the so-called technique of cultural analysis be applied to the problem of race tension, some important further perspectives can be acquired. The underlying assumption of this technique, as Mr.

Ernest S. Griffith has pointed out, is that there is always a basic tendency for all major elements in a culture to achieve a substantial harmony each with the other. A major change in any major cultural segment introduces an element of instability in the culture as a whole and sets in motion changes or adaptations in the other major segments. The major change in our culture is associated with the vast technological advancement of recent years, particularly in the economic field. "Changes and crises which occur on the economic level," to quote Dr. Robert E. Park, "where human relationships are relatively abstract and impersonal, must bring about repercussions on every other level. . . . When changes on the economic level are more rapid than changes on the political and religious levels, the solidarity and efficiency of society on every other level are inevitably affected."

In general, this is what has been happening in American society. There has been a definite "cultural lag," in that social and political relationships have not changed as rapidly as the economic. The result is "crisis" and "tension." This is important for us to understand. It underlines our primary need for a set of mechanisms, at the local and the national level both, by which these requisite adjustments in social and political relationships can be made. In the long run they will be made. Actually they are already taking place in American society now. It is in part because they are taking place, and in larger part because they are about to take place, that oppositional forces have tended to crystallize. Resistance stiffens; counteroffensives are deliberately launched, as in Detroit, Beaumont, and Los Angeles. Ugly as this reaction most certainly is, it should not of itself discourage the forces of goodwill and dishearten them for the job ahead. It is in a real sense a measure of the progress made by racial

COMMON GROUND

groups in recent years and particularly since the war, an indication of the extent of their challenge to the old status quo. It is a sign of the times. It is the place to go on from. We can move with the times and make the adjustments efficiently, sensibly, and quickly; or they can be brought about as a result of violence and protracted struggle that will only delay, not ultimately prevent, final achievement. There are evolutionary forces at work in our society stronger than the reactionary forces that would block them.

"It goes without saying," runs a recent editorial in the *Michigan Chronicle*, "that the democracy of which we dream can never be realized in this country until the gap between our peoples is bridged. The illusory concept of a black nation within our nation no longer blinds our group to the fact that a functioning democracy is predicated upon complete equality among all peoples, and that the narrow nationalism of any one group becomes an obstacle in the way of complete equality. The doctrine of white supremacy and the philosophy of Negro nationalism are twin evils which thwart national unity in peace and in war and play into the hands of fascist forces at home and abroad. The New Negro American has renounced this narrow nationalism, and the New White American has recognized the peril to world peace in the doctrine of white supremacy. These emerging groups in our society which have caught the profound overtones of this worldwide war for freedom must come together in a common fight for a new world order. This is the hope of no visionary, but rather the only

recourse left to those among us who dare to believe in a new world of freedom and equality. . . . In some respects, the New Americans, black and white, are making progress even in this period which is fraught with racism and hate."

The very fact that this editorial speaks in terms of "emerging groups" and "New Americans, black and white" is a recognition of the all-important fact that our culture is changing, and more rapidly perhaps than we imagine. Alert to these factors of cultural change, we need to adopt programs based upon an understanding of what is actually happening in American life now—not upon the assumption of a social equilibrium that existed, say, in 1905. We need to talk—all of us—in terms of a New America, not in terms of temporizing with reaction, of appeasing race bigots, and of a gradualism utterly out of keeping with the forces of the times.

Carey McWilliams is a familiar contributor to these pages. His recent book, *Brothers Under the Skin* (Little, Brown, \$3) is an indispensable volume for everyone searching to understand and heal increasing race tensions in America. It should be on the shelves of every high school and public library in the country and in the hands of all CG readers. Examining closely the problems of "color" in America, Mr. McWilliams discusses the Negro, the Chinese, Japanese, Mexican, Filipino, and other Americans, correlates the problems involved, and charts a constructive and workable method of approach to correcting them.

PACHUCOS IN THE MAKING

GEORGE I. SANCHEZ

WIDESPREAD attention has been drawn to the Los Angeles, California, gangs of zoot-suited, socially maladjusted, "Mexican" youngsters known as "pachucos." Mixed with the intelligent efforts and genuine concern of some public officials and laymen over the disgraceful situation which has been allowed to develop in the Los Angeles area, there is also much sanctimonious "locking of barn doors after the horses have been stolen" sort of expression and action by those whose past lack of interest and whose official negligence bred the juvenile delinquency which now plagues that city's officialdom, hinders the program of the armed forces, and embarrasses the United States before Latin America and the world.

The seed for the pachucos was sown a decade or more ago by unintelligent educational measures, by discriminatory social and economic practices, by provincial smugness and self-assigned "racial" superiority. Today we reap the whirlwind in youth whose greatest crime was to be born into an environment which, through various kinds and degrees of social ostracism and prejudicial economic subjugation, made them a caste apart, fair prey to the cancer of gangsterism. The crimes of these youths should be appropriately punished, yes. But what of the society which is an accessory before and after the fact?

Almost ten years ago, I raised this issue in an article in the *Journal of Applied Psychology*: "The frequent prostitution

of democratic ideals to the cause of expediency, politics, vested interests, ignorance, class and 'race' prejudice, and to indifference and inefficiency is a sad commentary on the intelligence and justice of a society that makes claims to those very progressive democratic ideals. The dual system of education presented in 'Mexican' and 'white' schools, the family system of contract labor, social and economic discrimination, educational negligence on the part of local and state authorities, 'homogeneous grouping' to mask professional inefficiency—all point to the need for greater insight into a problem which is inherent in a 'melting pot' society. The progress of our country is dependent upon the most efficient utilization of the heterogeneous masses which constitute its population—the degree to which the 2,000,000 or more Spanish-speaking people, and their increment, are permitted to develop is the extent to which the nation should expect returns from that section of its public."

When the pachuco "crime wave" broke last year, I communicated with the Office of War Information: "I understand that a grand jury is looking into the 'Mexican' problem in Los Angeles and that there seems to be considerable misunderstanding as to the causes of the gang activities of Mexican youth in that area. I hear also that much ado is being made about 'Aztec forebears,' 'blood lust,' and similar claptrap in interpreting the behavior of these citizens. It

COMMON GROUND

would be indeed unfortunate if this grand jury investigation were to go off on a tangent, witchhunting in anthropological antecedents for causes which, in reality, lie right under the noses of the public service agencies in Los Angeles County."

Subsequent developments have borne out the fears implied above. And still, in June of this year, the Los Angeles City Council could think of no better answer to the deep-rooted negligence of public service agencies than to deliberate over an ordinance outlawing zoot suits! The segregatory attitudes and practices, and the vicious economic exploitation directed against the "Mexican" in California in the past—not zoot suits—are responsible for the pachucos of today.

The pseudo-science of the Los Angeles official who is quoted as reporting to the Grand Jury on the Sleepy Lagoon murder case that "Mexican" youths are motivated to crime by certain biological or "racial" characteristics would be laughable if it were not so tragic, so dangerous, and, worse still, so typical of biased attitudes and misguided thinking which are reflected in the practices not only of California communities but also elsewhere in this country.

The genesis of pachuquismo is an open book to those who care to look into the situations facing Spanish-speaking people in many parts of the Southwest. Arizona, Colorado, Texas, and, to a much lesser degree, even New Mexico have conditions analogous to those which have nurtured the California riots. In some communities in each of these states, "Mexican" is a term of opprobrium applied to anyone with a Spanish name—citizen and alien alike, of mestizo blood or of "pure white" Spanish colonial antecedents. In many places these people are denied service in restaurants, barber

shops, and stores. Public parks and swimming pools, some of which were built by federal funds, are often closed to them. Some churches, court houses, and public hospitals have been known to segregate them from "whites." Separate, and usually shockingly inferior, segregated "Mexican" schools have been set up for their children. Discriminatory employment practices and wage scales, even in war industries (the President's Executive Order 8802 and his Committee on Fair Employment Practice to the contrary notwithstanding), are still used to "keep the 'Mexican' in his place."

An affidavit from California before me says that when a Spanish-name citizen of this country, in response to a public advertisement by a national railroad company, applied for a job, "he was told by the foreman, 'I have orders from the general foreman not to hire Mexican help.' On inquiry as to why Mexicans were not being employed, this foreman states as follows: that the Mexicans got drunk on the job, did not keep up with their work, caused trouble, and that the shops were open only to white labor; that if Mexicans wanted to work with the company they could work on the section gangs." Apparently drunkenness, laziness, etc. were tolerated on the section gangs!

A Texas friend says that the Mexicans in her town had been ordered out of the parks and that Mexicans were mistreated there. Another report tells of a group of school children of Mexican and Latin American origin who went to a neighboring town "to spend the day and to attend a celebration. . . . They decided to go swimming in a public swimming pool and they were denied entrance thereto because they were of Latin American and Mexican origin, although they permitted two Japanese children . . . to enter said swimming pool." The Chancellor of a Mexican Consulate "was expelled with

his wife and children from the ——— swimming pool in the town of ———, Texas; the only reason given for the expulsion was that they were Mexicans.” In another town “the teacher took the Latin American school children to a park . . . she was told by the keeper of the park to get out as this park was not for the use of the Mexicans.”

In the course of a hike, a Scoutmaster and his troop of Boy Scouts, all in uniform, were ordered out of a public park where they had stopped to rest, because they were “Mexicans.” A group of American citizens of Mexican descent, on the verge of joining the Army, “were denied entrance to the swimming pools because they were ‘Latin Americans’.” Soldiers in the uniform of the United States Army have been refused service in public places because they were “Mexicans,” several of them having been ejected when they insisted on buying a cup of coffee, a hamburger, or a bottle of beer.

A newspaper from a West Texas city states: “City Police Chief ——— today issued a request that all persons except negroes [sic] and Latin Americans stay out of the swimming hole at the ——— Street crossing on the ——— (river). ‘This portion of the river was fixed by the city especially as a swimming pool for negroes [sic] and Latin Americans. Many other people, not knowing this, are using it also. We’d appreciate their quitting the pool and leaving it to the persons for whom it was planned,’ Chief ——— said.”

A pathetic letter from a descendant of the colonial settlers of Texas states: “Do you think there is any hope of getting our problems solved? We wish you would do something to help us. We are being mistreated here every time we turn around. We are not allowed in cafes, movies, restaurants. Even Latin Americans in United States Army uniforms are

sometimes told they can’t see a show because the Mexican side is full. In the public schools our children are segregated. They are given only half a day’s school because of the teacher shortage, while the others have full-time classes. There is no teacher shortage for them. Please tell us if there is anything to do about it. We wrote a letter to the Office of Civilian Defense, Washington, D.C. But we haven’t heard from them. We don’t know if that is the right place to write to or not.”

A Mexican Consul reports that “there were signs posted by the ——— County authorities as follows: ‘For Colored and Mexicans,’ and in the Church named the ——— was this sign: ‘For Whites’ and another ‘For Mexicans.’ Mexicans are not permitted to attend this church on Sundays.” Not only in civic affairs and in Christian worship but even after death, the “Mexican” is segregated. It is reported: “in many cemeteries, whether owned by county authorities, by private individuals or corporations, or by religious organizations . . . the bodies of ‘Mexicans’ are denied the right to burial. . . .” In those cemeteries where such bodies are received “they are assigned a separate plot of land, far enough from the plot destined for the so-called ‘whites’ so as to be sure that the bodies of the so-called ‘whites’ will not be contaminated by the presence of the bodies of the ‘Mexicans’.”

A traveler on a transcontinental bus stated that “the bus stopped at ——— (town) so that the passengers could eat at a restaurant known as Hotel ———. He observed that everyone else was served except him. When he inquired why he was not waited on, he was advised that Mexicans were not served at said place.” Another report points out “that [high school] seniors graduating at ——— (town) were segregated at a banquet

COMMON GROUND

given them. The tables for the Latin Americans were placed in a separate locality from that reserved for the Anglo Americans."

A newspaper story tells of the building of a new theater in a west Texas city: "Today the cost already had moved past the \$40,000 mark and the seating capacity had been raised to 1,100 including 250 on the balcony where the colored and Latin American movie fans will be accommodated." The Mexican colony from the city of ——— reports that "the toilets in the courthouse bear a sign which reads 'For Whites—Mexicans Keep Out'."

In another town, on the Fourth of July, "several hundred citizens of the United States of Mexican extraction were told over the loud speaker that they should go home because the dance being held in a public square was for white people only. Among the persons ejected were many wearing United States soldier's uniforms." At still another place, again on the Fourth of July, at an American Legion dance, Spanish-name veterans of World War I were asked to leave because the dance was for "whites" only.

The constitution and by-laws of the so-called "White Man's Union" of a certain county in Texas provide that only "white" citizens shall be eligible for membership. These regulations state: "The term White Citizen, as provided herein, shall not include any Mexican, who is not of full Spanish blood. Only persons who are white citizens . . . shall be permitted to vote at any primary or other election held by this association." These regulations are also enforced in the Democratic primaries, the election machinery of the primaries being in the control of this "White Man's Union." Who, indeed, could prove that he is of "full Spanish blood," assuming, for argument's sake, that a mestizo or Indian, otherwise qualified, can be thus disfranchised! It should be noted that the

primary election is the election in such overwhelmingly Democratic counties as this.

Many communities provide a separate school for children of Spanish name. These "Mexican schools," are established ostensibly for "pedagogical reasons," thinly veiled excuses which do not conform with either the science of education or the facts in the case. Judging from current practice, these pseudo-pedagogical reasons call for short school terms, ramshackle school buildings, poorly paid and untrained teachers, and all varieties of prejudicial discrimination. The "language handicap" reason, so glibly advanced as the chief pedagogical excuse for the segregation of these school children, is extended to apply to all Spanish-name youngsters regardless of the fact that some of them know more English and more about other school subjects than the children from whom they are segregated. In addition, some of these Spanish-name children know no Spanish whatsoever, coming from homes where only English has been spoken for two generations or more.

The community mores suggested in the above illustrations do not reflect simply the attitudes of untutored masses. Equally glaring, un-American practices are carried on by those of privileged social and economic status. The basic real estate contracts in many subdivisions in several Texas cities provide that "neither they, nor their heirs, executors, administrators, or assigns, shall sell or lease any portion of said property to any person of Negro blood, or Mexicans." Another far too common provision in deeds stipulates that: "No lot or part of lot in said addition at any time may be occupied by or used by any person except those of the Caucasian race. . . . This provision shall be so construed as excluding from occupancy in said subdivision Mexicans, Latin

Americans, Negroes, and people of the yellow race." Wealthy, highly educated, prominent Latin Americans, some citizens of the United States and some citizens of prestige of Mexico and of other Latin American countries, have been refused the right to purchase or occupy property in those subdivisions. A Vice Consul of Mexico was requested to move out of a house in a city in Texas, "on the ground that, in that subdivision, properties could not be sold or rented to 'Mexicans'." A letter from a Mexican Consul to the mayor of a large city, referring to another such "incident," states: "It is with much regret that I am constrained to bring to your attention a matter that has caused a great deal of ill will and disappointment to the Mexican colony in — by reason of the fact that one of the most outstanding Mexican families in — was refused the right to acquire a place in which to live at — [street address] in — [subdivision] within the limits of the city of —, on the sole ground that the purchaser was a Mexican.

"I need not call to your attention the position which Mr. — owner of the — Company holds in this community. I can point out no other person who stands higher in the estimation of both the Mexican and the American people, who is a prominent civic leader and a successful business man. Certainly, a great injustice has been done in thus humiliating him and his family, which is a matter that reflects the attitude of many people residing in several sections of — [the city], where similar obnoxious clauses are included in the deeds."

These acts by otherwise intelligent people cannot be excused simply on the basis that they are motivated by commercial considerations. The same kind of acts are committed by public officials. During the second registration for the Selective

Service in a large city in Texas, the officer in charge gave a story to the press in which he announced that arrangements had been made to register Negroes, Latin Americans, and "whites" in separate rooms of the County Courthouse. Fortunately, vigorous protest brought about a satisfactory correction. The Selective Service procedure in certain places has forced American citizens of Spanish name to be classified as "Mexican" in the questionnaire which states: "3. My race is ___White; ___Negro; ___Oriental; ___Indian; ___Filipino. Other (Specify) ___." An attorney in a border city writes: "It appears that the persons in charge of filling out the blanks at the reception center are guided only by the sound of the name. If the name is Spanish, then they classify the selectee as 'Mexican'; if it is 'American' then the classification is, of course, 'White.' One of the latest cases is that of a son of —. His name is — [Spanish]; the mother is an Anglo American. . . . He was classified 'Mexican' because of the name —; yet, in the same group, another young boy, with an American or English name was classified 'White' even though he has Mexican and perhaps even Negro blood." [The mother in the latter case is "Mexican" and the father "Anglo."] It is to be noted that, through the intervention of national offices, orders have recently gone out calling for the cessation of such classification.

Applicants for positions listed by the United States Employment Service are frequently told their applications cannot be received because they are "Mexican" and would not be eligible. Insult is added to injury when, after the employers have subjected the "Mexican" to discriminatory wage scales, the other employees bring about their segregation. A report on oil workers points out that two refineries, "notwithstanding the fact that they have

COMMON GROUND

Government war contracts, pay from 10 to 13 cents an hour less to the 'Mexican' workers than the salary paid to Anglo-Saxon workers for the same kind of work. They keep separate toilet-rooms, separate drinking water faucets, and separate bath-rooms for the 'Mexicans'. . . ."

One of my assistants reports the situation in a border community, which "has contributed to the limit in manpower. Many of its young men enlisted in various branches of the service before they were drafted. As a result, Latin American boys from ——— [town] are at present all over the world. . . . A short time ago, a group of young Latin American girls . . . (all of them having brothers and sweethearts in the service) called Mr. ———, manager of the uso, by phone, and asked how they went about becoming uso hostesses." They were told just to come down and register, but when the spokesman said "there was a group of twelve Latin American girls who wished to offer their services, he said 'Oh, wait a minute. In that case you will have to see Father ——— (priest at ——— Church) who is organizing a Latin American uso.' The girls didn't like the sound of it, but they contacted the priest who told them he knew nothing about uso activities, and confirmed their belief that a Latin American uso, if established, would only be another form of segregation to which they should not subscribe."

Upon investigating the above matter, we were informed, in effect, that the local uso itself had no jurisdiction in the matter since it was entirely up to the Girls Service Organization as to whom they would admit for membership. My assistant states: "It is understandable that the sisters and sweethearts of these boys should feel not only a keen disappointment but a deep humiliation at what is to them a refusal of the opportunity to do their rightful part, as American citizens, in furthering

the war effort to which their loved ones are daily dedicating their lives."

Two years ago six friends wrote me as follows: "The undersigned write you so that, if you find it possible, you will make for us before the appropriate department an energetic protest for the humiliating treatment which we received. It happens that we were named by the Selective Service committee to undergo the examination for soldiers, and an employee of the draft board took us to eat at ——— Cafe. We were refused service solely because we were of Mexican descent. After that we were taken to Hotel ——— where we were served in an empty room. . . . As you will see this is not in accord with reason and justice and we fear that this is probably the work of fifth columnists who handicap the efforts of the government."

On July 12, 1941, before the pachuco question had become a matter of general interest, a Spanish American from California summarized the situation this way: "The so-called 'Mexican Problem' is not in fact a Mexican problem. It is a problem foisted by American mercenary interests upon the American people. It is an American problem made in the U.S.A." He was protesting the movement then on foot to permit the indiscriminate and wholesale importation of laborers from Mexico. In response to such protests steps were taken by the governments of the United States and of Mexico to protect both the imported alien and the residents of this area from the evils inherent in such letting down of the bars, evils of which ample evidence was furnished during World War I under similar circumstances. Today, however, the pressure of vested interests is finding loopholes in that enlightened policy and, again, the bars are rapidly being let down.

Si Casady of McAllen, Texas, in an editorial in the Valley Evening Monitor

hits the nail on the head when he says: ". . . there is a type of individual who does not understand and appreciate the very real dangers inherent in racial discrimination. This type of individual does not understand that his own right to enjoy life, his own liberty, the very existence of this nation and all the other free nations of the world depend utterly and completely on the fundamental principle that no man, because of race, has any right to put his foot upon the neck of any other man. The racial discrimination problem has been kept daintily out of sight for so long in the [Rio Grande] Valley that it cannot now be solved overnight. Instead of dragging it out into the sunlight where it could be left lying until all the nauseous fumes of hypocrisy and bigotry had dissipated, we have shoved the problem down into the cellar like an idiot child, hoping the neighbors would not notice its existence."

In two illuminating articles, Carey McWilliams, earlier in this magazine, has made a brilliant and forceful presentation of the "Mexican problem." Before him, Dr. Paul S. Taylor of the University of California and Dr. H. T. Manuel of the University of Texas had also clearly pointed out the evils inherent in the mistreatment of Spanish-speaking people. This writer and other students of the problem have, over the past twenty years, repeatedly pointed out the dangers and have continuously insisted on adequate remedial measures. Neglect on the part of public service agencies lies at the root of the disturbances which we observe today. Those disturbances, serious as they are, simply presage even worse effects in the future unless adequate remedial measures are undertaken immediately.

What would be the nature of these remedial measures? The malady suggests the cure. Where negative and un-Ameri-

can practices now prevail, undertake positive, equitable, American action. This is not as difficult as it appears at first blush. While unfavorable popular attitudes and community customs are difficult to correct and though there are many elusive factors back of the prejudicial situations I have referred to, the people involved are susceptible to sound guidance and leadership—particularly to that of their duly selected officials and of well-established civic organizations. Furthermore, I am sure that much of the mistreatment of Spanish-speaking people would not take place were it not for the fact that the common people take their cue from the discriminatory acts (of commission or omission) of their public officials.

The establishment of segregated schools for "Mexicans" lays the foundation for most of the prejudice and discrimination. Local and state educational authorities have the power to institute satisfactory remedies. There is no legal requirement in any state calling for the organization of such schools. There are all sorts of legal mandates to the contrary. Fortright action by school authorities could remove these blots on American education in a very brief period of time. As an illustration of how this may be done in Texas, consider this provision adopted by the State Legislature in 1943: "The State Board of Education with the approval of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction shall have the authority to withhold the per capita apportionment to any school district at any time that a discrimination between groups of white scholastics exists."

The exclusion of "Mexicans" from public places, solely on the basis of "race" (legally, they are "white"), can be stopped through the enforcement of such provisions as that embodied in the legislative Concurrent Resolution adopted in Texas a few months ago: "1. All persons

of the Caucasian Race within the jurisdiction of this State are entitled to the full and equal accommodations, advantages, facilities, and privileges of all public places of business or amusement, subject only to the conditions and limitations established by law, and rules and regulations applicable alike to all persons of the Caucasian Race. 2. Whoever denies to any person the full advantages, facilities, and privileges enumerated in the preceding paragraph or who aids or incites such denial or whoever makes any discrimination, distinction, or restriction except for good cause applicable alike to all persons of the Caucasian Race, respecting accommodations, advantages, facilities, and privileges of all public places of business, or whoever aids or incites such discrimination, distinction, or restriction shall be considered as violating the good neighbor policy of our State." Vigorous action by public officials in enforcing this mandate in Texas, and similar legal provisions in other states, would go far in solving this fundamental phase of the whole "Mexican" question.

These illustrations of specific remedial action could be multiplied by reference to legal mandates as to suffrage, jury service, practices in war industries, etc. Public officials—local, state, and federal—have in their hands the power to correct the discriminatory practices which lie at the root of prejudicial attitudes and actions on the part of some sectors of the public. I have the fullest confidence that the great majority of Americans would applaud the enforcement of those legal mandates.

The Spanish-speaking people of the United States need to be incorporated into, and made fully participating members of, the American way of life. The "Mexican" needs education, he needs vocational training and placement in American industry on an American basis,

he needs active encouragement to participate in civic affairs and to discharge his civic obligations, and he needs constant protection by public officials from the pitfalls into which his cultural differences may lead him or into which he may be forced by unthinking sectors of the public.

The record, briefly reported here, of oppressive self-righteousness and the "incidents" to which it has led is an appalling one. Even more frightening are the prospects of a future when such cheaply hatched social attitudes and practices come home to roost as the full-fledged and expensive spectres of crime, disease, ignorance, internal discord, and international enmity. One generation's sins of "racial" oppression on the part of a majority sector of the population are indeed visited upon its progeny, many fold. The fruits of "racial" discrimination are boomerangs—seeds which breed, in the majority group, fascism and tolerance of the concentration camp for "inferior races." The vicious practices referred to above do harm to the "Mexican," yes. However, infinitely more harm is done to the group which perpetrates or tolerates the practices. The pachuco is a symbol not of the guilt of an oppressed "Mexican" minority but of a cancerous growth within the majority group which is gnawing at the vitals of democracy and the American way of life. The pachuco and his feminine counterpart, the "cholata," are spawn of a neglectful society—not the products of an humble minority people who are defenseless before their enforced humiliation.

George I. Sanchez is Professor of Latin American Education at the University of Texas and author of *Forgotten People: A Study of New Mexicans*, published by the University of New Mexico Press in 1940.

PRELUDE TO DISASTER: DETROIT

LOUIS MARTIN

FOR MORE than a year before the Detroit riot of June 20-21, 1943, the worst America has seen in 25 years, journalists, government investigators, and thousands of citizens of this bustling war center were convinced that serious racial clashes were inevitable. Indeed, now that the riot has occurred in Detroit, city officials state they feared such disaster all along, despite previous denials. Why they should have denied it and kept their own quiet counsel is a strange story, one that may never be told.

In some respects the riot which cost the lives of 34 citizens began in World War I when labor agents scoured the South luring a vast army of Negro workers to Detroit, "the industrial Paradise where a man could be free." Here in the "arsenal of democracy" in World War II, are gathered important segments of all the racial and national groupings that make up America. Here one finds big and little islands of Americans of various descents—Polish, Negro, Italian, Hungarian, Jewish, Armenian—"hillbillies," and a few boulevards of bluebloods.

In 1910 there were only 5,741 Negroes in the city of Detroit. By 1917 this figure had risen to 23,000, and today this city of nearly two millions has a Negro population close to 200,000. For a ten-year period almost a hundred thousand in-migrants a year answered the call of the growing auto industries for cheap labor. These laboring armies which included a cross section of practically all mankind

came to help create the industrial miracle of mass production.

The boom-town character of Detroit's growth is an important key to much that seems baffling in the present picture. Detroit fluctuates between two extremes: either the people are up to their necks in prosperity or completely stranded in bitter depressions. In this city of recurrent booms and recurrent crises, the Negro has clung to the tail of the economic kite in conformity with American color proscriptions.

Today Detroit is prosperous, and almost a half million in-migrants have swelled the ranks of the working class. Most of these newcomers are 105 per cent Americans who have come from the hill country of Kentucky and Tennessee. They have moved in with their cousins who came in the last boom, or have pitched tents with strangers.

II

From the beginning of the First World War when Negroes began arriving in large numbers to work in the foundries of the motor industry, there appear to have been two major areas of Negro-white tension and conflict: one housing and the other jobs.

It must be stated first that both whites and Negroes have been in desperate need of housing. Nevertheless, two well-established methods have been employed in Detroit to control the space within which

COMMON GROUND

a Negro may live—legal measures such as restrictive covenants in property deeds on the one hand, and mob violence on the other. The famous Dr. Sweet case of 1925, in which Clarence Darrow came to the Negro doctor's defense, and the equally famous Sojourner Truth controversy of 1942 represent the two most important examples of Detroit's use of mob violence. In the Sojourner Truth controversy of last year a riot was precipitated which resulted in an international scandal and led to the indictment of three white men by a Federal Grand Jury for sedition.

The quiet work of the local judiciary on restrictive covenants which was upheld by the State Supreme Court has enabled the "better class" to keep the Negro in his place without any necessity for the violence which the poorer whites have employed. The influx of Negroes into the North has gradually led to the universal adoption of the southern instrument of Negro control—forced segregation or Jim-Crowism. The Jim-Crow laws of the South have become in the main the unwritten laws of the North.

Since the beginning of the present period of emergency, the Detroit Negroes have seriously challenged the color bar in housing. With the federal government in control of the housing field and the Nation in a war of "liberation" against racist tyranny, the Negro masses who have taken our announced war aims seriously began mobilizing to make democracy work in housing. Since all of the housing being built is war housing and the Negroes who need it are war workers, their determination was well fortified.

In the case of the Sojourner Truth project, whites in the area fought to protect the "whiteness" of their neighborhood, and the Negroes fought against exclusion—restrictive covenants notwithstanding. The Negroes won the fight against the whites who sought to keep

them out of the so-called white area, although they wound up with a Jim-Crow project.

In co-operation with the leadership of the UAW-CIO, Negro organizations made a great effort at the beginning of this year to make a model and democratic community out of the war-housing development at Willow Run, thirty miles from Detroit, where Ford built his bomber plant. After a spirited campaign to lift the color bar in these tax-built projects for war workers, on February 9 this year the Negroes were informed that John B. Blandford, Jr. and Herbert Emmerich of the National Housing Agency had ruled against bi-racial occupancy of the 3,000 unit Willow Lodge project which was nearing completion.

Negroes and whites work together in the bomber plant, but the government agency ruled they must not live together under the same roof—this, despite the fact that 24 bi-racial projects in other war areas had proven satisfactory. It was disclosed later in Washington that prior to Mr. Blandford's ruling, he had been called in by Representative Joseph Starnes of Alabama, chairman of the sub-committee of the House Appropriations Committee, and asked to explain why Negroes and whites were living together in several war-housing projects.

Undaunted by this rebuff from the federal agency, the Negro people and white workers appealed to the Detroit Housing Commission to open the war-housing projects under its specific jurisdiction—projects within the city limits—to all qualified tenants on a first-come, first-served basis. Thereupon, Mayor Edward J. Jeffries, who appoints the housing commission, decided to save them some embarrassment by taking the matter into his own hands. On April 29, 1943, he issued a statement, approved by eight of the nine City Councilmen, declaring that

PRELUDE TO DISASTER: DETROIT

the "racial characteristics" of Detroit neighborhoods must not be violated. This public declaration was made seven weeks prior to the riot of June 20-21.

III

In peace and in war, in the off-years and in the periods of prosperity, the Detroit Negro has had his job problems. In the present war period he has been faced with two specific difficulties: one to get a job in war industry in the first place, and the other to get the job for which he was qualified through training, experience, and seniority.

During civilian production, the 25,000-odd Negro auto workers were concentrated, with rare exceptions, in the foundries and maintenance departments of the major factories. In some no Negroes were employed at all. The manpower shortage and the efforts of the President's Fair Employment Practice Committee, coupled with Negro and white agitation, finally forced the corporations to alter their employment policies and open the factory gates to a new army of Negro workers. Negro women, however, are still penalized, and in the Spring of 1943, there were 30,000 white women in defense employment while only 100 Negro women had found similar jobs.

Although Negroes were finally employed, the majority were not given the jobs for which they had trained or for which they were otherwise qualified. Thus as production moved forward, the struggle for up-grading among Negro workers became increasingly urgent. When the corporations began to pay some deference to Executive Order 8802, which outlaws discrimination in defense employment, the Klan-minded, anti-union elements among the workers began to use the so-called "hate strike" weapon. Rank-and-file white workers were led to stop production and

walk out when a Negro was hired in a "white" job, and the managements cited these incidents among the white workers as their reasons for not up-grading qualified Negroes.

Since January 1, 1943, "hate strikes" and anti-Negro demonstrations involving a loss of vital production have occurred in several major war plants: Hudson Naval Arsenal, Dodge Truck, Timken Detroit Axle, U.S. Rubber, Vickers Inc., and the Packard Motor Car Company. It is significant that just three weeks before the Detroit riot, over 20,000 Packard workers staged a "hate strike" and stopped war production for almost a week in protest over the up-grading of three Negroes in the aircraft division of the Packard Company.

IV

While I have dwelt briefly upon the developments, in two major areas, of Negro-white tension, it is important to record that there has been something less than sweetness and light in the general field of civil liberties. The Detroit Police Department, which at the time of the riot had less than 40 active Negro officers on the city force of 3,600, has been repeatedly charged with unwarranted brutality toward Negro citizens. Despite the Civil Rights Law of the state, discrimination against Negroes by commercial establishments, particularly restaurants and taverns, is reported to be increasing. Many instances of discrimination have involved Negroes wearing the uniform of one or another of the armed services. Three Negro sailors in uniform who were refused service in the popular Greenfield Cafeteria on Woodward Avenue brought suit against it under the Civil Rights statute. An all-white jury, on March 29, failed to reach any verdict, and the case was dismissed. A week before the riot of June 20th, seventeen white juveniles were ar-

COMMON GROUND

rested at Eastwood Park, a popular amusement place in East Detroit, for ganging up on Negro youths and running them out of the park area. No Negroes were arrested, and the police records show that the white juveniles had deliberately sought to bar Negroes.

V

The reader who is familiar with Negro-white relationships in other major cities in this war period may conclude that Detroit's story is the same old story. I think, however, while Detroit shares much in common with other large industrial centers, there is an important difference. If Detroit is the "arsenal of the democracies," there is some reason to believe that it may also be the capital of American fascism.

Gerald K. Smith, Father Coughlin, and Frank Norris, who are generally regarded as the god-heads of reaction, have made Detroit their national headquarters. It may be no accident that this "arsenal of democracy" was chosen for their operational base. In the wake of these nationally known figures, hundreds of ambitious evangelists and rabble-rousers have also invaded the area, which seemed to be a city of great promise. It has been reported frequently by established clergymen that there are over 2,500 self-appointed gospel preachers working in the Detroit war industries, who preach part-time. These fundamentalists have been credited with giving leadership to the old and new Detroit Southerners and the workers who left the farms of the Great Lakes region to enter local war factories.

This concentration of anti-union, anti-liberal rabble-rousers in Detroit is reflected in the advertisements of independent fundamentalist religious groups which take up a full page and more of the Saturday editions of the Detroit dailies. As scoundrels often take refuge in patriotism,

the native pro-fascist elements frequently take refuge in religion. According to the fundamentalists, Jews are accursed and Negroes are descendants of Ham, the fallen son of Noah, although, as a friend of mine suggests, no accounting is ever made how Noah, an upright man, should have had a black son.

It is the conviction of many responsible Detroit citizens that these reactionary rabble-rousers are providing ideological leadership for a great mass of underprivileged and ignorant whites and that they form the hardest core of resistance to the extension of democracy to the Negro people. They have been taught to believe that to give the Negro his constitutional rights, which he is demanding more and more aggressively, would be to lose something valuable themselves.

Pro-fascist penetration within the foreign-born groups of Detroit has also been frequently charged, and controversies over the fate of the homeland provide the opening wedge for anti-democratic agitation. The extent of this penetration is questionable, although some of it would appear inevitable because of the voluntary segregation of these national groups into separate communities where old hates and prejudices may easily be kept alive. The propagators of anti-Semitism and anti-Negro sentiment have found a fertile field among groups of Polish and Italian descent, although there are powerful liberal elements among both which are counter-acting these prejudices.

The question often arises: "Is there a fifth column operating in Detroit?" Whether foreign-inspired or of strictly native growth, the Ku Klux Klan, the National Workers League, and the host of "social clubs" among workers which limit their memberships to "white Christians" are blinds for activities which can in practice fulfill all of the purposes of Dr. Goebbels. It is significant that on

PRELUDE TO DISASTER: DETROIT

May 27, 1943, Richard Frankensteen, Vice-President, and George F. Addes, Secretary-Treasurer of the UAW-CIO, wrote Miss Mary T. Norton, Chairman of the House Labor Committee, and urged that her Congressional Committee "start an immediate investigation so as to ferret out and bring to light America's industrial 5th Column." The joint letter warned that "Attempts to create national or racial antagonism, refusal to follow established practices of collective bargaining, arrogant exercise of authority by supervision together with the deliberate spreading of rumors tending to undermine workers' morale—have all made up a consistent pattern of provocation throughout a large number of plants within the UAW-CIO."

VI

The struggle for a better job and economic security seems to constitute the rock on which Negro-white relationships most often break. Both whites and Negroes are exhibiting a dread of the economic dislocations which are sure to come with victory. The integration of the Negro into the industrial fabric of America, into many sacred precincts during this emergency, has alarmed whites. The Negro is fighting for his economic security, prodded in this struggle by the knowledge that he is the marginal man of industry.

In Detroit these fears both among whites and Negroes are intensified because the average Detroiter recognizes that this is a community of big booms and bigger depressions. If the Negro becomes entrenched in skilled jobs, when the emergency is passed and there is a job scarcity, the traditional white jobs may be lost forever. The Negro, on the other hand, regards the emergency as an opportunity to break into heretofore sacred precincts and establish himself in an economic position formerly denied him because of prejudice.

Since Pearl Harbor the Detroit Negro has made a few positive gains in employment which have excited the worst fears of the white chauvinists. The frequent sight of Negro bus drivers and motormen on the streets of Detroit has been enough to excite an emotional reaction among many whites, particularly the newcomers. Negro men and women who failed to get war jobs have taken employment in service fields where only whites worked before the war. Negro girls are waiting on customers in chain drug stores, and they are conspicuous enough in many new fields to give some credence to the biased belief that Negroes are "getting out of their place."

According to every student in the field of race relations, throughout the nation the Negro people have shown a new aggressiveness during this war period. The spirit of subservience has vanished in most quarters, and a minority among the Negroes have even shifted to the opposite extreme. The new militancy has been attributed to the effects of the propaganda of the war effort, the announced war aims of our country, and to the widespread shortage of manpower. Over 600,000 Negro citizens are in the armed services, and they are young men keenly conscious of their second-class status. The paradox of the American people fighting racist tyranny abroad while the majority sanction the doctrine of white supremacy and racial discrimination at home has seared the souls of black folk.

The Negro press, the NAACP, and scores of organizations have challenged these inconsistencies and sought redress for the Negro's legitimate grievances. As their protests grow louder, the counter-movement of the reactionary, anti-Negro elements in our society becomes more daring. To heal this breach, or prevent it from widening further, local, state, and national governments have done almost nothing. They have failed to take a firm and

COMMON GROUND

forthright position. The nation was long aware of the "explosive" situation in Detroit, and the Negro and liberal white leadership of the city literally begged for governmental investigations into the area of race relations. Yet nothing was done.

If one could look upon the Detroit scene from some Olympian height, it would appear that the diverse racial and national groups readily blend into a working whole with one conspicuous exception—the Negro. Prejudice has shunted him off into a socio-economic pocket from which any escape is difficult; and what has happened to him here has happened to

him in almost every section of this great country. Yet if the democratic potentials of the American idea are ultimately to be fulfilled, the Negro, too, must be blended into the whole. True democracy has no room for less than full citizenship.

Louis Martin is editor of the Michigan Chronicle, one of the leading Negro newspapers of the country. He is a member of the Mayor's Interracial Committee in Detroit, set up to cope with racial problems growing out of the riot.

WE GO ON FROM HERE

D'ARCY McNICKLE

WHEN I tell strangers that I work with Indians, I know what to expect. It is something I have learned. That look of surprised interest. It isn't every day you run across such an occupation. The note is in the voice even when the words differ: "How interesting! Tell me more!"

One uses caution then. How much more? What specific details? I try a few preliminary remarks, nothing frightening about vital statistics or land holdings. But I don't get far with it. I am impaled by a knowing look.

"But why do you keep them on reservations? Shouldn't they be citizens like the rest of us?"

I look more closely at the stranger then. How much will he listen to—how much will he hear?

"Indians live on reservations by choice," I say, "and they are citizens, all of them."

"Really?" The incredulous tone reverberates like a heavy brass gong.

That seems to clear the way for some elementary facts about the Indian in Our Midst—His Nature and Habits.

But I am soon disappointed. The stranger remembers he has an appointment or his train is about to leave.

Of all possible topics of conversation, Indians pall soonest on the chance acquaintance. At first, mention of the red man catches at whatever shreds of romantic imagination cling to your listener. But it isn't much at best; the talk slows and stops. And you are left to reflect on how it is that people appear to want to think of Indians as feathered and primitive, at the same time resenting what they understand to be the government's failure to rescue them from primitivism, and then how they lose interest as soon as they learn they have had a distorted picture all the time.

Not that it always happens that way. Often there is genuine interest in Indian

matters—interest enough to survive the shock of being found in error.

Invariably what sharpens the attention and leads to further inquiry is the statement that “Indians live on reservations by choice.” That, for some reason, is hard to understand.

“But don’t they want to be civilized? Wouldn’t they be better off with machines and modern techniques?”

I have to say something like yes and no—they do and they don’t. It isn’t a matter you can answer in a word. There is a gross assumption in the very question, and you feel that somehow you have to jar the questioner loose from his moorings before he’ll ever understand what you’re talking about. I try him on my story about Tom, an Indian of the Southwest. The name of his tribe doesn’t matter—it could have been one of several.

An energetic young extension man (government farmer) had persuaded Tom to plant a field of corn in a newly developed area. The government had just completed some work there, throwing up earth dikes to guide and impound flood waters that come down during summer thunder showers—the only kind of rain the region knows. By spreading the water over a wide area, instead of letting it rush into arroyos, the ground gets a good soaking and farming becomes possible.

Tom was glad to have the opportunity to raise food. He had seen many crops wither without coming to fruit, so he could appreciate the advantage of farming irrigated land. And it turned out just as the government man said—the soil was fertile, the moisture held, and he harvested an abundant crop. The government man was pleased too. He talked to Tom that fall, nourishing the little seed of ambition which he had planted.

The following spring he returned to the area and looked for Tom. Maybe he could persuade him to plant still a larger

field. Maybe he would add wheat to his undertaking.

And then the let-down. Tom was sitting in the shade with his family. Plow had not been put to ground. In fact, Tom had no thought of planting. He even seemed surprised that this was expected of him.

“But, Tom, look how well you did last year,” the government man argued. “It wasn’t much work, and you got all that corn to show for it.”

“I got lots of corn left. More corn than the woman needs. Maybe next year I plant again.”

Many white men encountering that point of view suffer a moral shock from which they never recover. “You can take it from me,” they tell you, “Indians are childish. Until they grow up, get a proper sense of values, there’s not much you can do.”

This is worth some thought, and anyone who has had to do with Indian matters, whether government man, missionary, or welfare worker, has had the thought to wrestle with. Is it that, being close to Indians and being charmed by something we have seen, we ask less of them than we ask of ourselves or of our children? Or because we condemn the harsh treatment they have endured, do we do things for them in atonement, and thereby rob them further?

As the thought turns over and over, I am reminded of a scene in an Indian encampment on the banks of the Missouri River one winter day, six years ago. I was there to tell these Indians of a plan the government had to buy some land and put them on it. They were homeless and landless, broken bands of Chippewas and Crees, prairie dwellers, who had outlived the last buffalo herds. For years they had haunted the outskirts of cow towns along the Canadian border, butchering an occa-

COMMON GROUND

sional stray cow, picking over the garbage cans standing in alleys, worrying county officials with requests for relief.

It was dead winter, there had been heavy snow the day before, and now the wind swept frost trails out of the flat emptiness of the Canadian Northwest. The river valley was a two-mile funnel that caught up great draughts of ice needles and poured them against the Indian camp.

Inside, under flapping canvas, we sat, twenty of us, on boxes and shaky stools, around an improvised stove made of a discarded galvanized-iron wash tub. The fuel was cottonwood, and anyone who has ever burned cottonwood will understand me when I say that it made a roar like fire, and flame was visible, but remarkably little heat issued. Frost particles blew around our ears.

We were twenty adults, as many as could crowd together around the stove. But what I remember most vividly is the children. There were a half-dozen of them, playing on the big brass-postered bed behind us. Knowing how numbed we were sitting at the fire, I looked up several times to inquire of the children. The bed was in the corner, pushed hard against the tent wall, and wind-driven snow powder sifted through the air, or perhaps expired breath froze and hung about. I looked up, expecting to see gestures of unhappiness. One child obviously had a heavy cold. He worked at his nose with a long sleeve. But there were no complaints.

We sat in our huddle for close to two hours—and in that time, no adult turned his attention from our earnest conversation. The children played on the bed, talking all that time in whispers. Never even in their laughter did they obtrude themselves. It wasn't that they were cowed; there was no furtiveness in their fun-making. Their upbringing was so much a part of daily life, and so con-

genial to it, that it was not necessary to put them on company manners.

Much that the adults said that day was temperate and thoughtful and far-seeing (and incidentally opposed to what the government wanted to do for them), but nothing they said was as impressive as what their children did.

I recall quite a different occasion, a meeting with the tribal council, an elective body, of a Southwestern tribe to hear a captain of the United States Army present a request for land. The Army wanted 400,000 acres of the tribal reserve as a practice range for aerial gunnery. It would be necessary to remove all habitations from the area and all livestock, since live ammunition would be used. The area in itself was considerable, but what weighed heaviest on the minds of the tribal representatives was the fact that it lay exactly across their best grazing lands, where water and grass were most abundant. The families scattered through the area could, with some hardships, move out and take up residence elsewhere—but there was nowhere to move the cattle and horses. The rest of the reservation was heavily over-grazed. It meant that stockraising, the principal livelihood, was out for the duration.

The council members asked many questions of the Army captain. They examined the maps he brought along. He demonstrated how desirable the area was for the Army's purpose. It was practically table flat. There were no fringing mountains to catch planes approaching or leaving the practice range. It was scarcely populated; in the Army's eyes, obviously, it was no more than barren waste. To the Indians it was home.

A decision had to be made finally, and the decision was the tribe's. The government was there to advise with them, not to tell them what their decision should be.

They didn't hesitate, once they knew what was wanted and why it was wanted.

"If the Army thinks it will help to win the war," the Chairman said, after there had been some discussion in the native tongue and after each member had been polled, "if the Army wants it, it can have it. It can have whatever our tribe owns, if that is necessary."

The Army captain, strong, tall, blue-eyed and fair, accustomed to aggressive action, was speechless for probably one of the few times in his life. His face flushed and he made a vain gesture of gratitude.

As representative of the government, I felt that the tribe should make as good a bargain as circumstances warranted.

"No doubt," I remarked, looking toward the captain, "the Army means to compensate you for the use of this land. Perhaps it would be well now to agree on the terms."

The Chairman never hesitated. He put the question in his tongue and the response was instantaneous.

"We ask nothing. Whatever the Army wants to pay will be satisfactory."

Other scenes come to mind—I mention only one more. We are sitting before a Committee of Congress considering a proposed bill which would authorize certain white men to complete by purchase title to certain lands lying within an Indian reservation which predecessors of the white men had settled upon some seventy-five or eighty years ago, at a time when the reservation boundary was perhaps not too clearly defined. It is a complicated, criss-crossed, muddled-up affair which has been alternately in the courts and in Congress for the last thirty years. The respective rights and equities of white settlers and Indians hinge upon multitudinous decisions of the Justice Department, the Federal Courts, of water masters, and of Congress.

The speakers for the white settlers were eloquent in testifying to the good faith of the white settlers, hardy pioneers who braved the terrors of the desert and blood-thirsty savages to carve out homes of lovingkindness with roses growing at the gate.

The evidence for the Indians indicated they had been pushed around by a lot of hairy-chested miners during the days of the Comstock Lode rush; that they had been murdered, their women raped, their houses burned; and that under this impact they had given way, allowing the white men to take over areas on which they had lived for centuries. Their story was amply supported by accounts of explorers and fur hunters, by reports of early Indian Agents—even the first territorial governor had left a record of vain effort to protect the Indians in their homes.

Finally the Committee was ready to hear the two tribal delegates who had sat silent through the hours of testimony. What was most remarkable about that moment was that it was the first time representatives of the tribe had ever been asked to appear in behalf of their cause. Land had been taken from them by a previous Act of Congress, facts concerning their right of occupation had been in dispute, water rights in the river which flowed through their land had been adjudicated—yet never before on any occasion involving their interest had they been asked to testify.

They had sat quiet, listening. Then they were asked to come forward and give their names and occupations.

"How does it happen," the Committee Chairman finally asked, after many preliminaries, "that your tribe has never defended itself? Why didn't you hold onto your lands?"

The Indian spokesman considered that for only a moment.

"Well, I guess we didn't know we had a right to speak."

COMMON GROUND

"You didn't know? You mean you were told you didn't have the right?"

"No. Just that the old people didn't know better. It wasn't their fault. They let the white people do what they wanted. They were illiterate."

"Now you have waked up, is that what you mean?"

"Yes. Now we have been to school. Now we know that we have a right to live, to claim what is our own. Now we will defend what is ours. We are free men. We are citizens and we want to assume our full responsibility as citizens as fast as possible. Our men have volunteered for the armed services to fight for all of us, all the people in this country. Our school children buy war stamps and bonds. Just in our little school the children have bought \$1,500 worth of bonds and stamps. We have almost forty men in the armed services, just from our little tribe of about ninety families. It is like this. We live in a democracy that champions fair play for minorities. We want to stand on our own feet like any other citizens, and so we will protect what is ours."

Once the spring had been tapped, the words flowed quickly, out of great feeling. The voice was quiet, strong. It came to us out of the flat desert and the barren mountains, out of much quietness, much thinking.

We sat in the Committee room, watching the dark young Indian lean part way across the polished table top. His hand gestured before him, marking out before his own eyes the invisible lines of his desert land, all that he was claiming for his own, all that he was ready to defend.

Why should this be difficult to understand, this desire to live in the desert or in the mountains, away from that which is not yours? To choose that which is your own and to wrap it around you, hold it to you—surely that is a trait of our common humanity. An Indian reservation is

not a prison and Indians are not prisoners—except that like all of us they are prisoners of their own flesh. They seek that which warms them, and they fly from the terror of the unknown.

There have been two extremes always in dealing with Indians—the extreme of the heavy fist, and the extreme of the honeyed word—and neither has been right, neither has seen the Indian as he is. If he does not plant corn year on year in order to build up financial resources, we condemn him, and in our mood of condemnation we fail to perceive that he practices a discipline in his family which would shame the best of our child specialists. Out of his meager resources, he contrives a generosity of spirit which leaves us speechless, yet we think him a simpleton for allowing himself to be out-guiled by the unscrupulous. So we see him always through the lenses of a culture which is not his, which he never claimed as his own, and which he has not yet desired as his own. All the difficulties we have with Indians, trace to that; all the wrong things we do for Indians, trace to that. Some day we may learn better, here, and wherever in the world we have two races, two cultures in contact.

We have been years traveling to this point. The history of the Indian Service is long and full of the tedium of bad decisions and worse choices of policy. There have been times when this Service has been excoriated as a kind of arch criminal among government agencies. But this has been less than fair. Its policies and attitudes across the hundred and more years of its existence have only reflected our community of thought on matters of race and culture. It has been no better than the times in which it lived.

When I say that we have traveled to this point, I say it with no particular sense of accomplishment. We are only at a place

WE GO ON FROM HERE

of beginning, and we go on from here. Not in this country only but wherever in the world native people are subject to sovereign powers other than their own, a fresh start will have to be made. There are indications that change is already in process. The experiences of the last dreadful years have taught the fatal necessity of change. And our own Indian Service, now come of age, will have things to contribute.

In the matter of developing and conserving the resources of a native people, it can contribute a rather considerable experience in financing Indians on the land, in working out land management plans, in attacking problems in soil erosion and timberland management.

In the matter of native education, it can offer a selective application of principles of progressive education, out of which have grown schools which are among the best rural schools in the country—schools in which children study the resources of the family and the tribe, schools which function as the hub of their communities, which put students in active operation of cattle and sheep herds, which provide vocational education geared to today's job requirements.

In the matter of cultivating native arts and crafts, it has carried through research in historic design, established standards of craftsmanship, explored marketing methods and facilities and (the acid test) made arts and crafts a profitable enterprise.

In the matter of native government, it has eight years of laboratory work with Indian tribes, out of which has emerged a variety of political organizations and chartered businesses drawn from tribal backgrounds and tribal incentives.

In the matter of according freedom of worship and belief, it has enunciated principles of cultural acceptance which should be basic in any "minority" or colonial policy.

On further thought, and without pushing the matter, perhaps this is a record of accomplishment. But, as I said, we go on from here.

Educated in the University of Montana and in France and England, D'Arcy McNickle has been with the Indian Service since 1936. A member of the Flathead Tribe in Montana, he is the author of a novel about Indians, The Surrounded, published by Dodd, Mead in 1936.

THE FIRST DAY

GEORGE AND HELEN
PAPASHVILY

AT FIVE in the morning the engines stopped, and after thirty-seven days the boat was quiet.

We were in America.

I got up and stepped over the other men and looked out the porthole. Water and fog. We were anchoring off an island. I dressed and went on deck.

Now began my troubles. What to do? This was a Greek boat and I was steerage, so of course by the time we were half way out I had spent all my landing money for extra food.

Hassan, the Turk, one of the six who slept in the cabin with me, came up the ladder.

"I told you so," he said as soon as he saw me. "Now we are in America and you have no money to land. They send you home. No money, no going ashore. What a disgrace. In your position, frankly, I would kill myself."

Hassan had been satisfied to starve on black olives and salt cheese all the way from Gibraltar, and he begrudged every skewer of lamb I bribed from the first-cabin steward.

We went down the gangplank into the big room. Passengers with pictures in their hands were rushing around to match them to a relative. Before their tables the inspectors were busy with long lines of people.

The visitors' door opened and a man with a big pile of caps, striped blue and white cotton caps with visors and a top button, came in. He went first to an old man with a karakul cap near the window,

then to a Cossack in the line. At last he came to me.

"Look," he said in Russian, "look at your hat. You don't want to be a greenhorn all your life. A karakul hat! Do you expect to see anybody in the U.S.A. with a fur hat still? The customs inspector, the doctor, the captain—are they wearing fur hats? Certainly not."

I said nothing.

"Look," he said. "I am sorry for you. I was a greenhorn once myself. I wouldn't want to see anybody make my mistakes. Look, I have caps. See, from such rich striped material. Like wears railroad engineers, and house painters, and coal miners. Don't be afraid. It's a cap in real American style. With that cap on your head, they couldn't tell you from a citizen. I'm positively guaranteeing. And I'm trading you this cap even for your old karakul hat. Trading even. You don't have to give me one penny."

Now it is true I bought my karakul coudie new for the trip. It was a fine skin, a silver lamb, and in Georgia it would have lasted me a lifetime. Still—

"I'll tell you," the cap man said. "So you can remember all your life you made money the first hour you were in America, I'll give you a cap and a dollar besides. Done?"

I took off my coudie and put on his cap. It was small and sat well up on my head, but then in America one dresses like an American and it is a satisfaction always to be in the best style. So I got my first dollar.

THE FIRST DAY

Ysaacs, a Syrian, sat on the bench and smoked brown paper cigarettes and watched all through the bargain. He was from our cabin, too, and he knew I was worried about the money to show the examiners. But now, when the cap man was gone on to the next customer, Ysaacs explained a way to get me by the examiners—a good way.

Such a very good way, in fact, that when the inspector looked over my passport and entry permit I was ready.

"Do you have friends meeting you?" he asked. "Do you have money to support yourself?"

I pulled out a round fat roll of green American money—tens, twenties—a nice thick pile with a rubber band around.

"O.K.," he said. "Go ahead." He stamped my papers.

I got my baggage and took the money roll back again to Ysaacs' friend, Arapouleopolus, the money lender, so he could rent it over again to another man. One

prove it, and a friend of Gospadin Buffalo Bell beside. This Arsenna had come first to America twenty years before as a trick show rider, and later he was the boss cook on the road with the Gospadin Buffalo Bell. Every few years, this Arsenna, whenever he saved enough money, went home to find a wife—but so far with no luck.

"Can't land?" he asked me.

"No, I can land, but I have no money to pay this little boat to carry me to shore." A small boat went chuffing back and forth taking off the discharged passengers. "I try to make up my mind to swim, but if I swim how will I carry my baggage? It would need at least two trips."

"Listen, donkey-head," said Arsenna. "This is America—the carrying boat is free. It belongs to my government. They take us for nothing. Come."

So we got to the shore.

And there—the streets, the people, the



dollar was all he charged to use it for each landing. A bargain.

On the outer platform I met Arsenna, an Ossetian, who had been down in steerage, too. But Arsenna was no greenhorn coming for the first time. Arsenna was an American citizen with papers to

noise! The faces flashing by—and by again. The screams and chatter and cries. But most of all the motion, back and forth, pressing deeper and deeper on my eyeballs.

We walked a few blocks through this before I remembered my landing cards

COMMON GROUND

and passport and visas. I took them out and tore them into little pieces and threw them all in an ash can. "They can't prove I'm not a citizen, now. What shall we do?"

"We get jobs," Arsenna said. "I show you."

We went to an employment agency. Conveniently, the man spoke Russian. He gave Arsenna a ticket right away to start in a Russian restaurant as first cook.

"Now, your friend? What can you do?" he asked me.

"I," I said, "am a worker in decorative leathers particularly specializing in the ornamenting of crop handles according to the traditional designs."

"My God," the man said. "This is the U.S.A. No horses. Automobiles. What else can you do?"

Fortunately my father was a man of great foresight and I have two trades. His idea was that in the days when a man starves with one, by the other he may eat.

"I am also," I said, "a sword maker. Short blades or long; daggers with or without chasing; hunting knives, plain or ornamented; tempering, fitting, pointing—" I took my certificate of successful completion of apprenticeship out of my chemidon.

"My God. A crop maker—a sword pointer. You better take him along for a dishwasher," he said to Arsenna. "They can always use another dishwasher."

We went into the earth and flew through tunnels in a train. It was like the caves under the Kazbeck where the bones of the great skulled giants are hidden, and it smelled even worse.

The restaurant was on a side street and the lady spoke kindly. "I remember you from the tea room," she said to Arsenna. "I congratulate myself on getting you. You are excellent on the piroshkis, isn't it?"

"On everything, madame," Arsenna said grandly. "On everything. Buffalo Bell, an old friend of mine, has eaten thirty of my piroshkis at a meal. My friend—" he waved toward me—"will be a dishwasher."

I made a bow.

The kitchen was small and hot and fat—like the inside of a pig's stomach. Arsenna unpacked his knives, put on his cap, and, at home at once, started to dice celery.

"You can wash these," the Hasaika said to me. "At four we have a party."

It was a tray full of glasses. And such glasses—thin bubbles that would hardly hold a sip—set on stems. The first one snapped in my hand, the second dissolved, the third to the tenth I got washed, the eleventh was already cracked, the twelfth rang once on the pan edge and was silent.

Perhaps I might be there yet, but just as I carried the first tray full to the service slot, the restaurant cat ran between my feet.

When I got all the glass swept up, I told Arsenna, "Now, we have to eat. It is noon. I watch the customers eat. It makes me hungry. Prepare a shaslik and some cucumbers, and we enjoy our first meal for good luck in the New World."

"This is a restaurant," Arsenna said, "not a duquani on the side of the Georgian road where the proprietor and the house eat with the guests together at one table. This is a restaurant with very strict organization. We get to eat when the customers go, and you get what the customers leave. Try again with the glasses and remember my reputation. Please."

I found a quart of sour cream and went into the back alley and ate that and some bread and a jar of caviar which was very salty—packed for export, no doubt.

The Hasaika found me. I stood up.

THE FIRST DAY

"Please," she said, "please go on. Eat sour cream. But after, could you go away? Far away? With no hard feelings. The glasses—the caviar—it's expensive for me—and at the same time I don't want to make your friend mad. I need a good cook. If you could just go away? Quietly?"



Just disappear, so to speak? I give you five dollars."

"I didn't do anything, so you don't have to pay me. All in all, a restaurant is probably not my fate. You can tell Arsenna afterward."

She brought my cap and a paper bag. I went down through the alley and into the street. I walked. I walked until my feet took fire in my shoes and my neck ached from looking. I walked for hours. I couldn't even be sure it was the same day. I tried some English on a few men that passed. "What watch?" I said. But they pushed by me so I knew I had it wrong. I tried another man. "How many clock?" He showed me on his wrist. 4:30.

A wonderful place. Rapidly, if one applies oneself, one speaks the English.

I came to a park and went in and found a place under a tree and took off my shoes and lay down. I looked in the bag the Hasaika had given me. A sandwich from bologna and a nickel—to begin in America with.

What to do? While I decided, I slept.

A policeman was shaking me. He spoke. I shook my head I cannot understand. Then with hands, with legs, rolling his eyes, turning his head, with motions, with gestures (really he was as good as marionettes I saw once in Tiflis), he showed me to lie on the grass is forbidden. But one is welcome to the seats instead. All free seats in this park. No charge for anyone. What a country.

But I was puzzled. There were iron arm rests every two feet along the benches. How could I distribute myself under them? I tried one leg. Then the other. But when I was under, how could I turn around? Then, whatever way I got in, my chin was always caught by the hoop. While I thought this over, I walked and bought peanuts for my nickel and fed the squirrels.

Lights began to come on in the towers around the park. It was almost dark. I found a sandy patch under a rock on a little bluff above the drive. I cut a *shaslik* stick and built a fire of twigs and broiled my bologna over it and ate the bread. It lasted very short. Then I rolled up my coat for a pillow like the days during the war and went to sleep.

I was tired from America and I slept some hours. It must have been almost midnight when the light flashed in my face. I sat up. It was from the head lamp of a touring car choking along on the road below me. While I watched, the engine coughed and died. A man got out. For more than an hour he knocked with tools and opened the hood and closed it again.

Then I slid down the bank. In the

war there were airplanes, and of course cars are much the same except, naturally, for the wings. I showed him with my hands and feet and head, like the policeman: "Give me the tools and let me try." He handed them over and sat down on the bench.

I checked the spark plugs and the distributor, the timer and the coils. I looked at the feed line, at the ignition, at the gas. In between, I cranked. I cranked until I cranked my heart out onto the



ground. Still the car did not move.

I got angry. I cursed it for a son of a mountain devi. I cursed it for the carriage of the diavels in the cave. I cursed it by the black-horned goat, and when I finished all I knew in Georgian I said it again in Russian to pick up the loose ends. Then I kicked the radiator as hard as I could. The car was an old Model T, and it started with a snort that shook the chassis like an aspen.

The man came running up. He was laughing and he shook my hands and talked at me and asked questions. But the policeman's method did not work. Signs weren't enough. I remembered my dictionary—English-Russian, Russian-English—it went both ways. I took it from my blouse pocket and showed the man. Holding it under the headlights, he thumbed through.

"Work?" he found in English.

I looked at the Russian word beside it and shook my head.

"Home?" he turned to that.

"No," again.

I took the dictionary. "Boat. Today."

"Come home—" he showed me the words—"with me—" he pointed to himself. "Eat. Sleep. Job." It took him quite a time between words. "Job. Tomorrow."

"Automobiles?" I said. We have the same word in Georgian.

"Automobiles!" He was pleased we found one word together.

We got into the car, and he took me through miles and miles of streets with houses on both sides of every one of them until we came to his own. We went in and we ate and we drank and ate and drank again. For that, fortunately, you need no words.

Then his wife showed me a room and I went to bed. As I fell asleep, I thought to myself—Well, now, I have lived one whole day in America and—just like they say—America is a country where anything, anything at all can happen.

And in twenty years—about this—I have never changed my mind.

George and Helen Papashvily will be remembered as the authors of "The Sound of Home" in the Autumn 1942 issue of CG. New American and old-stock, they spin their yarns together.

Kurt Werth is the illustrator.

TOGETHER WE TEST OUR COURAGE

MARJORIE McKENZIE

THE FRANK hysterical fear of the southern white "friends" of the Negro over the "radical" Negro leadership of the North, their shaking apprehension that the delicate relations between the races in the South will be unbalanced, for example, by the reasonable and cultured language of Walter White of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People or Lester Granger of the National Urban League leaves me coldly unmoved. They remind me of my small puppy barking at shadows. There is currently about that much substance to their fears. In turn, the so-called radical northern leadership is afraid of nothing as much as the possibility that the adjustment made by southern Negroes to the tyranny of the surrounding white world will crystallize at its present level for another generation. Of the two fears, the latter has considerably more justification, and those who are disturbed by it understand its real significance to be of worldwide proportions.

It is not the missionary spirit that prompts northern Negro leadership to concern itself with the status of the southern Negro. Nor is the motivation purely self-serving. The struggle of the northern Negro for economic salvation and cultural advance has been bitter enough, and his further progress is immeasurably complicated by the paralysis of southern attitudes creeping into every section of the country. Now the war provides him with a hundred demonstrations daily that the issue is no longer sectional, nor even national, as perhaps he alone in

the past knew it to be, but it is urgently international as well. The leaders are not the only ones who know this. The northern Negro soldier, so frequently assigned to camps in the Deep South, has a practical knowledge born of the indignity and injustice he has suffered, which amply documents the position taken by his leaders. If he is from New England or southern New York or the Northwest and meets Jim Crow and the other southern shibboleths for the first time in a Mississippi Army camp, that experience is shattering enough to his morale. But if, added to his fury and despair, he must cope with the apparent acceptance of these things by the colored people of the South, he begins to feel a hopelessness about the future of the Negro in America and of the colored peoples of the whole world. He begins to question the validity of this war for freedom he is being trained to fight abroad, and begins to think instead that it would make equally good sense to die for democracy at home.

The rebellion of the northern Negro against southern tradition is one of the few democratic bulwarks opposing the indoctrination of an entire nation with slave psychology. He combats the strength of the Solid South, the white South, intent upon keeping a cheap source of labor supply, upon keeping its Negro population in the South and in the "proper place." He resists also the weakness of the southern Negro who has learned to temporize with the terror of his environment. The only support northern Negro leader-

COMMON GROUND

ship has in this battle, one of the unheralded battles of the war, comes from a few courageous reconstructed southern rebels and certain groups of white Northerners—the intellectuals, artists, actors, professional athletes, the liberals, part of the rank and file of the labor movement and many of its leaders, and those who take their Christian religion seriously. There are other white Northerners who succumb daily to the southern pattern. Among these, the industrialists are the most powerful group. They are intrigued and tempted by the South's greatest resource—an overabundance of people without employment or convictions regarding the rights of labor. The largest group is composed of the fence-sitters, ignorant of the Negro, neither hating him nor wishing him well, who can be swayed by the first set of ideas on the race problem presented to them. Somehow, the white Southerner, with his great stake in and greater passion for preserving the status quo, always gets to them first—in America, in England, in Australia, in North Africa—spreading America's shame and increasing the tyranny that threatens us all.

There are indications that the white South fears the day of reckoning is not far distant. Hence, this oft-articulated alarm in recent months that the armed truce between white and black in the South is being "disturbed" by northern agitators. In the first place, of course, there is nothing delicate about race relations in the South—unless violence, insult, and denial by one people upon another may be so described. In such a milieu it becomes necessary to make an adjustment to the aggression, to oppose it with some comparable kind of force, or to get out. Nine million Negroes have remained, and opposition by any of them is sporadic. Clearly they have developed

as their inescapable *modus vivendi* an implied acceptance of the aggressor's interpretation of inferior status. This accommodation has been recognized by northern Negro leadership as an acute problem, and the classic and continuing disagreement with southern Negro leaders is proof enough that the issue is vital in the total complex of racial operations.

Southern Negro leadership is sensitive about the role assigned it. Wary of criticism that it characteristically appeases and compromises, it called a conference at Durham, North Carolina, in October 1942, and issued a statement which described its goals and suggested a plan for interracial co-operation in the South. The Durham conferees were deft on the question of segregation, the basis of the chief schism between northern and southern Negro leadership. They said: "We are fundamentally opposed to the principle and practice of compulsory segregation in our American society, whether of races, or classes, or creeds; however, we regard it as both sensible and timely to address ourselves now to the current problems of racial discrimination and neglect. . . ." Subsequently, a group of southern white leaders called a conference in Atlanta, in April of this year. Nearly a hundred white men and women went on record admitting that the Negro has been discriminated against in the South economically, politically, and in the administration of justice, but they stated their views on segregation frankly: "the only justification offered for those laws which have for their purpose the separation of the races is that they are intended to minister to the welfare and integrity of both races."

Both the Durham and Atlanta groups talked about a positive program for improving the status of the Negro in the South and arranged for future mutual planning. A collaboration committee met in Richmond in June, but concrete pro-

TOGETHER WE TEST OUR COURAGE

grams have yet to be evolved by the continuation committees appointed. The reaction of northern Negroes to these first steps has been generous but watchful. The general sentiment has been that any sensible getting-together, any improvement, is superior to the past lethargy in the South by Negroes themselves and by whites not motivated by the mob spirit.

Unfortunately, the problem of southern Negro attitudes has an immediacy within the context of the war ideology that may not wait for the long-term program contemplated by the conference statements. And this is the problem: how do you teach a fierce love for freedom, which is so essential a part of America's great heritage, to people who have so little of it? How can the southern Negro measure the extent of the injustice done him when he has experienced almost no example of justice to serve as a standard? How can a man respect himself as an important member of society if none of the persons in control around him so respect him? What can you do about a college-trained business or professional man who permits the local white merchants to call him "Charlie"? How can you redirect the thinking of a college teacher who defends segregation as warmly as the nearest white politician and wistfully remarks she wishes "they" would give her school an adequate appropriation?

Such assimilation and even defense of the white man's taboos are incomprehensible to a northern Negro. My own first encounter with Jim Crow has been an open wound for ten years. I spent my junior year in college at Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee. It was my first time South and my first experience in a Negro school. One day soon after my arrival, I boarded a street car with several classmates to go in town to shop. We became separated and I sat down in the front of the car. Soon I heard quiet but insistent hisses

from behind, and when I turned, my friends were gesturing for me to join them. I smiled back uncomprehendingly, since there was no vacant seat near them, and stayed where I was. But the motor-man had noticed this by-play and also started making signs toward the rear of the car. Still I did not understand. Then he stopped the car in the middle of the block, got up and came down the aisle to my seat, and told me to move—and why—in tones of authority and contempt. In reply I demanded a refund of my fare and got off the car, but I have never forgotten the way the blood surged to my brain and the deep, dark red hate that filled my heart for what the South had done to me that day and continues to do every day to almost one-half her sons and daughters in myriad and infinitely more cruel ways. Today, in Washington, I am frequently at Union Station meeting or saying good-bye to friends who are traveling between the North and South. Whenever I pass the Jim-Crow coach crouched under the engine and baggage car of a long, late southern train and see it filled with helpless Negroes, that same dark resentment floods over me again. I have solved my personal vendetta with the South by staying just north of the Mason-Dixon line, where, as Mr. P. B. Young, Sr., editor of the Norfolk Journal and Guide says, it is much safer to speak one's mind, although in other ways it may be neither safe nor satisfactory.

A personal solution such as this is not valid. If I were really devoted to the cause of the Negro in a pure and unselfish sense, I would go South and "stir him up," as the demagogues put it. I would go down to Georgia and Mississippi and Alabama and talk about the Four Freedoms to every Negro man, woman, and child and, for that matter, to every white one as well who would listen. I would read the Declaration of Independence and the Bill of

COMMON GROUND

Rights and the Fourteenth Amendment to all Negroes, but especially to young people and would try to convince them that this great mantle of protection covers them, too. Because once they really believed they were included, the past indignities the South has heaped upon them would, thenceforth, become insupportable. What self-respecting citizen would sit behind these long, brown curtains which southern railroads have hung in dining cars to segregate Negro and white diners? Who, believing that all men are created equal, would submit to the implication of such a concession? What black boys and girls, having read the high-sounding, morale-building words of war propaganda and really believing they were included, would sit in the backs of buses and street cars, climb to the galleries of theatres, enter buildings by alleys, go without training and jobs, endure disrespect for their country's uniform, which so many of them now wear?

Although I did not stay, I have been south this year, and I have said these and other things to southern Negro intellectuals and to Negro college students. The students seemed to turn the idea over as if it were a new thing, but they were wary and uncommunicative. A few were violently independent liberals and plainly felt they had to be violent about liberal thinking. The intellectuals, whom I baited in flower-filled, magazine-cover living rooms, were more difficult. They resented my disturbing the brittle, shallow ice of their compromise with reality. Insulated by beauty and ease and comfort, they could forget for a little the terror outside their satin-hung windows and could even attempt to justify their world. Many were honest and bitter and admitted they felt trapped, either temporarily or permanently, as an understandable consequence of serving others or themselves. Those who had achieved successful avoidance

behavior were happiest, but they were very formal, as if to make up to each other for all the politeness they don't get from white Southerners. They will say *this isn't so*, but I have been along during chance encounters with white acquaintances. My own pride would not care how soft the voice nor how wide the smile if a man could not shake my hand and call me by the simple but democratic title of "Mr." or "Mrs.," instead of a humorous "professor" or "doctor," as a constant reminder that there can be no equality of any kind between the races in the South.

The thinking of lower-class southern Negroes is naturally not as elaborate as that of the intellectuals and seems, therefore, a more fertile field for reconstructing attitudes. Besides, against them the conflict is an open war, the injustice is greater, and there are no extenuating velvet cushions from which they may contemplate their proscribed existence. In opposition to evil they have nothing to lose and an infinite deal of self-respect to gain. For them, the road to democratic thinking by way of labor union affiliations, tenant farmer associations, and co-operatives is straighter and ideologically sound. There will be tremendous acceleration of this process as a result of lucrative war jobs and overseas service with the armed forces. Their ideas will mature without any "stirring-up" by northern "agitators" or cautious control by southern leaders. The certain unwillingness of returning soldiers and skilled war workers to go back to the old barrenness will provide the focal point for future constructive work in the South by the liberals of both races. Other factors that will help bring about a solution are additional federal assistance and the migration of a lot more Negroes out of the South.

The northern Negro recognizes that the enigma of race relations in America is an

TOGETHER WE TEST OUR COURAGE

accentuated Southern problem that will have to be worked out primarily on southern soil. It is equally obvious that no militant leader can develop and work in the South until the people are ready to support one, and until now the repression has always been deep enough to strangle leaders before they could emerge. The truth of the matter is that the majority of "radical" "northern" leaders came up in the South and then came out of it. In view of this escape, it is ironic that Southerners, white and black, are always pleading that they want to settle their problems in their own way and are always reminding us in the North that we also have our problems. We admit this readily. But we know that we cannot keep current with our own brand of trouble if the southern backlog persists in holding us up at every step.

In spite of the control and the repression, it is clearly imperative that Negroes who remain in the South must somehow overcome their present frightened thinking. The South is afraid that they will overcome it, and the North is afraid that they will not, or at least will be too long about it. While everybody is thus wrapped in fear—southern Negro and white, and northern Negro, too, and all for different reasons—it is extremely difficult to push through the combined fears and see the reality. A global revolution, with its inexorable repercussions in human relationships in countless remote corners of the earth, inevitably will shake the South and her people. The stirring of the dream of self-realization, quickened now all over the world, stirs the southern Negro, too; stirs also his fears. He, as the rest of us, is confronted with a vastly larger role: he wonders if he is capable of it; he trembles before himself. His rut is deep and nar-

row, but it offers a kind of security. Dare he risk this shabby comfort and answer the demands of his northern brother and his destiny? These are his fears and they underline the fears of the northern "agitators" who realize that, North and South, we are caught in this crucible together and together must test our courage.

Marjorie McKenzie is a young Washington lawyer and a columnist for the *Pittsburgh Courier*.

The continuation committees representing the Durham and Atlanta Conferences, mentioned by Miss McKenzie, met a second time in Atlanta August 4 and authorized the incorporation of the movement into the Southern Regional Council and the establishment of a paid executive staff to travel through the South as situations arise calling for preventive planning and action. Dedicated to a "new declaration of American principles and a new dedication of ourselves to the task of covenanting together with all regions and races for the continued better ordering of our society," the Council called on President Roosevelt to name a national committee with similar purposes with which the Council might co-operate in the working out of a national program. Inter-racial in its makeup, the Southern Regional Council has as temporary co-chairmen Charles S. Johnson of Fisk University and Howard W. Odum of the University of North Carolina.

The Institute for Ethnic Democracy proposed earlier in these pages by John Collier and Saul K. Padover might well be the national co-ordinating agency to work with regional groups like the Southern Council. Ed.

GROWING OUT OF SHADOW

MARGARET WALKER

WHEN I was five, I was busy discovering my world, and it was a place of happiness and delight. Then, one day, a white child shouted in my ears “nigger” as if he were saying “cur,” and I was startled. I had never heard the word before, and I went home and asked what it meant, and my parents looked apprehensively at each other as if to say, “It’s come.” Clumsily, without adding hurt to the smart I was already suffering, they sought to explain but they were unable to destroy my pain. I could not understand my overwhelming sense of shame, as if I had been guilty of some unknown crime. I did not know why I was suffering, what brought this vague unease, this clutching for understanding.

When I went to school, I read the history books that glorify the white race and describe the Negro as a clown and a fool or a beast capable of very hard work in excessive heat. I discovered the background of chattel slavery behind this madness of race prejudice. Once we were slaves and now we are not, and the South remains angry. But when I went home to the good books and the wonderful music and the gentle, intelligent parents, I could see no reason for prejudice on the basis of a previous condition of servitude.

I went to church and I wondered why God let this thing continue. Why were there segregated churches and segregated hospitals and cemeteries and schools? Why must I ride behind a Jim-Crow sign? Why did a full-grown colored man sit meekly behind a Jim-Crow sign and do nothing about it? What could he do?

Then I decided perhaps God was on the side of the white people because after all God was white. The world was white, and I was black.

Then I began to daydream: it will not always be this way. Some day, just as chattel slavery ended, this injustice will also end; this internal suffering will cease; this ache inside for understanding will exist no longer. Some day, I said, when I am fully grown, I will understand, and I will be able to do something about it. I will write books that will prove the history texts were distorted. I will write books about colored people who have colored faces, books that will not make me ashamed when I read them.

But always I was seeking for the real answer, not the daydream. Always I wanted to know. I lay awake at night pondering in my heart, “Why? Why? Why?”

I heard Roland Hayes and Marian Anderson sing, and James Weldon Johnson and Langston Hughes read poetry. In the audiences were well-dressed, well-behaved colored people. They were intelligent, yet they were not allowed to sit beside white people at concerts and recitals. Why? Every night Negro cooks and maids and chauffeurs and nursemaids returned home from the white people’s houses where their employers were not afraid to sit beside them.

I learned of race pride and race consciousness and the contribution of the Negro to American culture. Still I was bewildered. America was a place of strange contradictions. The white grocery man at

GROWING OUT OF SHADOW

the corner who was so friendly when I was in his store thought it a crime for a white and colored boxer to fight in the ring together. But he did not think it a crime for a Negro to be drafted to fight for America.

I decided vaguely the white man must think these things because of fear; because he felt insecure. Perhaps he was a little afraid of what would happen in a free America.

How did I first discover the color of my skin? I had only to look in my mirror every morning to know. I must say it appeared to me a good healthy color. But there is a difference in knowing you are black and in understanding what it means to be black in America. Before I was ten I knew what it was to step off the sidewalk to let a white man pass; otherwise he might knock me off. I had had a sound thrashing by white boys while Negro men looked on helplessly. I was accustomed to riding in the Jim-Crow street cars with the Negro section marked off by iron bars that could not be moved. For a year and a half I went to school in a one-room wooden shack. One year when my father's school work took him out of town constantly, my mother lived in fear of our lives because there was no man in the house to protect us against the possibility of some attack. Once we climbed the fire escape to see a movie because there was no Negro entrance, and after that we saw no movies. Another time my mother stood for hours upstairs in a darkened theatre to hear a recital by Rachmaninoff because there were no seats for colored. My father was chased home one night at the point of a gun by a drunken policeman who resented a fountain pen in a "nigger's pocket." My grandmother told the story of a woman tarred and feathered in the neighborhood. A mob came and took her from her home because it was rumored that a

white man was visiting her. Although they took her deep into the woods, her screams were heard by relatives and neighbors. My grandmother heard them, too. Next day the woman's family went to the woods and brought her home. She was still alive, so they removed the tar and feathers with turpentine. She was horribly burned and scarred.

And always the answer and the question in a child's mind to each of these was "Why? Why do they do these things?"

Negroes congregating on a city block to argue and talk about the race question imitated what they heard from the pulpits or what the white folks told them: "The trouble with the Negro problem in America is just we needs to git together . . . we don't co-operate . . . we always kicking one another . . . this is a white man's country and a black man ain't got no place in it . . . we just cursed by God, sons of Ham, hewers of wood and drawers of water . . . our leaders are crooked and they betray us . . . we need to get a little money and make ourselves independent of the white man . . . if it wasn't for the white man we'd be way back in the jungles of Africa somewhere . . . we oughta thank the white man for bringing us to this country and making us civilized . . . trouble is we scared to fight, scared to stick up for our rights . . . we'll fight for the white man but we won't fight for ourselves . . . all the progress we've made we owe to the white man. . . . I hates a white man worsener I hates poison, left to me I'd kill up every paleface in the world . . . don't let 'em fool you when they grinning in your face, they want something . . . only God can help us . . . it takes time, that's all, to solve the Negro problem . . . all we got to do is humble ourselves and do right and we'll win out . . . colored man hurts hisself most of the time . . . all we got to do is do like the children of Israel and the slaves done way back yonder,

COMMON GROUND

pray! . . . colored people oughta get out of the notion that they are Negroes . . . that word Negroes is what hurts us. . . .”

But all of it was no real answer to the anxious questioning of a child burdened constantly with the wonder of what race prejudice is.

When I went away to college in my teens, I left the South with mingled emotions. I had been told that Negroes in the North were better off than Negroes down South; they had more sense and more opportunities; they could go any place, enjoy recreational facilities such as parks and movies, eat in restaurants without discrimination; there were no Jim-Crow transportation restrictions, and if Negroes were subjected to any indignity they could sue the person or company involved; there was no such thing as lynching. Best of all Negroes could vote.

I was, nevertheless, shy and afraid over the prospect of going to a white school; I might prove backward as a result of my southern training. I had also perforce become somewhat anti-white myself and I feared coming into close contact with white people. Yet I anticipated a new kind of freedom once I crossed the Mason-Dixon line.

Imagine my great hurt to discover that few of the wonderful promises came true. I was refused service in restaurants in Evanston and Chicago time and again. In the South I had suffered no similar embarrassment because there I had known what to expect. I discovered that most of the Negroes in the northern colleges and universities were from the South, for the majority of Negroes in the Middle West had no money with which to take advantage of higher education.

What was most amazing was my discovery of my own prejudices and my first realization of the economic problem.

Because of the nature of segregated life

in America many Negroes have misconceptions of white life. I was no exception. As servants, Negroes know certain elements of white life and we characterize the whole in this way. My first step toward understanding what it means to be black in America was understanding the economic set-up in America.

In the South I had always thought that, naturally, white people had more money than colored people. Poor white trash signified for me the lazy scum of the marginal fringe of society with no excuse for poverty. Now I discovered there are poor white working people exploited by rich white people. I learned that all Jews are not rich. I discovered that all Negroes are not even in the same economic class. While there are no Negro multi-millionaires, there are many wealthy Negroes who have made money by exploiting poor Negroes, who have some of the same attitudes toward them that rich whites have toward poor whites and that prejudiced whites have toward all Negroes. Imagine my amazement to hear a white girl tell me she was forced to leave Northwestern because she had no money. But I, a poor Negro girl, had stayed even when I had no money. They never threatened me with expulsion. Yet I did not find a white school in the Middle West free of prejudice. All around me was prejudice. To understand the issues out of which it grew had become my life's preoccupation.

A year out of college found me working with poor whites—Jew and Gentile—and poor Negroes, too. In Chicago for the first time I began to see that Negroes, as almost entirely a working-class people, belong with organized labor. My background was so thoroughly petty-bourgeois, with parents who belonged to a professional small-salaried class, that I had not understood that people who worked with their brains were also workers. I knew we were poor and decent, and that was all I

knew. In the South many, if not most, petty-bourgeois Negroes are anti-union, anti-strike, and anti-white. This, of course, is not strange when one considers the history of Negroes in unions in the South, their forced role as scabs, the brutal treatment they received as such, prior to CIO, the general nature of Negro life in the South, threatened always by sinister undertones of white violence.

Thus there began for me in Chicago a period in which I was given an analysis of the whole strata of class-society in America. As soon as I began working in close contact with whites, I discovered startling things peculiar to both racial groups, all adding up to one main conclusion: that whites suffer psychologically from the problem of race prejudice as much as Negroes. I began to see race prejudice as a definite tool to keep people divided and economically helpless: Negroes hating whites and whites hating blacks, with conditions of both groups pitiful, both economically and psychologically. I saw, too, that it was not beyond the ability of both groups to reach understanding and to live peaceably side by side, that labor organization of Negroes and whites was certainly one step forward toward that end.

The second step toward understanding what it means to be black in America came in understanding the political problem. By 1932 and 1936, the Negro had, out of the dire necessity of destitution, become politically conscious even in the Deep South where he has no real voice in politics. In the North, the East, and particularly the Middle West, his vote assumed significant proportions and in many instances proved a balance of power.

In 1936 I cast my first vote in Chicago in a Presidential election. It was a great time to come of age. There had been four years of the New Deal, and many of the

ills and evils of our society, as they immediately touched Negroes and all poor people, had been somewhat alleviated. We had benefited from the WPA, the NYA, the Federal Housing and Federal Farm Administration, Social Security, the adult education program; we had benefited in many instances where there had previously been evil practices of discrimination. I began to dig into the historical background of politics in America, to read the record where Negroes were concerned. I began to see parallels. When the thirteen colonies revolted, they revolted on the premise that taxation without representation is tyranny. Yet that is precisely what the Negro suffers in the South today. Moreover, poor white people as well have no voice in their government. If the truth could be nationally known and understood, the small number of votes cast in electing southern Representatives and Senators to Congress, as compared with the population, would not merely appear ridiculous but alarming. Not that these citizens of America are too indifferent to vote; they are disfranchised under the pretense of a poll-tax not paid or a grandfather clause. The old saying that a voteless people is a helpless people became a basic fact in my understanding of the Negro problem.

A third step came from a growing world perspective. As a child, reading the history books in the South, I was humiliated by some unhappy picture or reference to a Negro. They made me burn all over. It was as if we were cut off from humanity, without sensitivity. I could make no connection between my life as a Negro child in the South and the life of Chinese children or Indian children or children in South Africa. I grew up and became self-supporting, yet I had not connected myself with working women all over the world, with poor peasant women who are

COMMON GROUND

white as well as black. Now I began to reach out. I saw it was eternally to the credit of Negroes in America that we were represented in Spain on the side of the Loyalists with men, nurses, volunteer workers, our humble gift of an ambulance, our moral support. We can be proud that Ethiopia found a willing ear for help from us. While white America is far too prone to appreciate the struggle of people in distant lands and forget the problems on its own doorstep, its disadvantaged groups are often too obsessed with their own problems to see further than the bridge of their nose. I realized it was essential for Negroes to be identified with every heroic struggle of an oppressed people, with the brave Chinese, the Indians, the South Africans, the Negroes in the West Indies who fight for liberty. Now that we are engaged in a global war, it is even more essential that all peoples of the earth gain a world perspective and become conscious of our common humanity and man's struggle to be free.

Yet I am sure that economic, political, and social understanding is not all. There is need for a new type of spiritual understanding, and I use the word not in its narrow religious meaning. I am concerned with something far more meaningful in the lives of individual men and women, of greater practical value and far better po-

tentialities for personal and social growth. Once the human spirit is washed clean of prejudices, once the basic needs of men are considered and not the pocketbooks of the few nor the power of a handful, once institutionalized religion is liberated into religious meaning, of necessity there must begin to bloom upon the earth something spiritually more durable than any of the mystic conceptions of religion that mankind has thus far brought forth. Then no man will look at another with fear, patronage, condescension, hatred, or disparagement, under pain of his own spiritual death.

Margaret Walker is author of *For My People*, chosen by Stephen Vincent Benét as the 1942 volume in the *Yale Series of Younger Poets*.

"I know there can be no individual solving of this matter of prejudice," she writes, "that neither Negroes nor whites can solve it alone. It is a mass problem. Yet I believe each individual has a role to play and a weapon he can use. I believe I am less fearful now and less inarticulate because I have achieved some basic understanding of the problem. If, by using the only means of expression I have, I can help make people more concerned and less confused about our interracial fate, I will have played my role in helping reach a common ground of goodwill and co-operation."

GROWING INTO FREEDOM

LILLIAN E. SMITH

I AM a southern woman born in that region of all the earth where race prejudice is sharpest, where it has its bitterest flavor, its deepest roots, where the relationship of the two races has become so intertwined with hate and love and fear and guilt and poverty and greed, with churches and with lynchings, with attraction and repulsion that it has taken on the ambivalent qualities, the subtle conflicts, of a terrible and terrifying illness.

And because I was born there and have lived most of my life there, I find it difficult to think without emotion about my South—and race. *Segregation, White Supremacy, the Negro's Place* are not words to me, nor theories, but a way of life, a tragic way which I, and others like me, white and Negro, have lived since birth.

It is not easy to pick up such a life and pull out of it those strands which have to do with color, with Negro-white relationships, for they are knit of the same fibers that have gone into the making of the whole fabric; they are woven into its most basic patterns and designs. The mother who taught me what I know of tenderness and love and compassion taught me also the bleak rituals of keeping the Negro in his place. The father who rebuked me for an air of superiority toward schoolmates from the mill settlement and rounded out his rebuke by gravely reminding me that "all men are brothers" also taught me the steel-like inhuman decorums I must demand of every colored male.

Neither the Negro nor sex was often discussed in my home. We were given little formal instruction in these difficult matters, but we learned our lessons well. We learned the intricate system of taboos, of renunciations and compensations, of manners, voice modulations, words, along with our prayers, our toilet habits, and our games. I do not remember how or when, but I know that by the time I had learned that God is love, that Jesus is His Son, that all men are brothers with a common Father, I also knew that I was better than a Negro, that all black folk have their place and must be kept in it, and that a terrifying disaster would befall the South if ever I treated a Negro as my social equal. I had learned that God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that we might have segregated churches in which it was my duty to worship each Sunday and on Wednesday at evening prayers. I had learned that white southern people are a hospitable, courteous, tactful, and warmhearted people who treat those of their own color with consideration and as carefully observe Jim-Crow customs, segregating from all the richness of life—"for their own good and welfare"—thirteen million people whose skin is colored a little differently from my own.

I knew that a member of my family would always shake hands with old Negro friends, would speak gently and graciously to members of the Negro race unless they forgot their place, in which event tones would grow peremptory and icy, drawing

COMMON GROUND

lines beyond which only the desperate would dare take one step. I knew that to use the word "nigger" was unpardonable and no well-bred person was quite so crude as to do so—nor would a well-bred person call a Negro "mister" or invite him into the living-room or eat with him.

I knew that my old nurse, Aunt Chloe, who had so patiently nursed me through long months of illness, who had given me refuge when a little sister took my place as the baby of the family, who comforted me, soothed me, delighted me with her stories and games, let me fall asleep on her deep warm breast, was not worthy of the passionate love I felt for her, but must be given a half-smiled-at affection similar to that one feels for one's dog. I knew that the deep respect I felt for her, the tenderness, the love, was a silly childish thing which every normal child outgrows—that such love begins with one's toys and is outgrown and discarded with them. I learned to give presents instead of esteem and honor; I learned to use a soft voice to oil my words of superiority; I learned to cheapen with tears and sentimental talk of "my old mammy" one of the profound and tender relationships of my life.

From the day I was born, I learned my lessons. I was put into a frame too intricate, too complex, too twisting to describe here so briefly, but I learned to conform to its slide-rule measurements. I learned that it is possible to be a Christian and a Southerner simultaneously; to be a gentlewoman and an arrogant callous creature in the same moment; to believe in freedom, to glow when the word is used, and to practise slavery from morning to night. I learned it in the way all of my southern people learn it: by closing doors that lead into honest thinking and feeling, by turning away from new ways of living.

I closed the doors, or they were closed for me. Then one day I began to open

them again. Why I had the desire, or the strength, to open them would require in the answering a self-analysis too long, too stark for me to make here. And perhaps I would not have the honesty that such an analysis would demand of me; nor the will to make it. I know only that somewhere along the uphill path we all travel from babyhood to maturity I learned in my heart and imagination what it means to be rejected by one's fellow men. How or why one learns this is not so important as that it is learned. Perhaps it comes to a little child in the family when it feels deprived of a love which it wants; perhaps through experiences when tender human relationships have been betrayed; sometimes when one feels one's self the object upon which an adult misuses his power.

These profound hungers of a child and how they are filled must have much to do with the way in which later experiences are assimilated. To excerpt, therefore, an experience from a life, from a family background, and describe it as an isolated phenomenon, surely is not only a distortion but an act without real significance. Yet I believe, as I travel the road back to childhood, that there was one race experience which I had that may have left a lasting effect upon my personality. I should like to preface an account of it by giving a brief glimpse of my background and my family, hoping that somehow the reader by entering my home with me will be able to blend the sharp ragged edges of the experience into the full life picture.

I was born and reared in a small Deep South town whose population was about equally Negro and white. My life began as one member of a large family whose material environment was made smooth by moderate wealth. The nine of us grew up freely in a home of many rooms, surrounded by spacious grounds, lawns, back yard, gardens, fields, and barn. We were

GROWING INTO FREEDOM

given the advantages of schooling, music, art which are available in the South, and our world was not limited to the South for always travel to far places seemed a simple and natural thing to contemplate, and usually there was at least one of us in some distant part of the world.

We knew we were a respected and important family of this small town, but beyond this knowledge we gave little thought to status. Our father made money for the fun and excitement of making it, not for what money itself can buy, nor the security that it sometimes gives. And I do not remember at any time wanting money for its own sake, nor do I remember that thrift and saving were ideals which our parents considered important enough to urge upon us. We were trained to think that each of us should have a profession in which we were interested primarily because of its usefulness to the world, and the family thought it the right thing to make sacrifices, if necessary, to give each child adequate preparation for his life's work. We were trained to think books are important, and music and art, but above all else the urgent thing was what each of us planned to "do with our lives." That we must "do something" seemed as natural and inevitable as breathing. While many of our neighbors spent their energies in counting the limbs on their family tree, or reliving the old days, or refigting that bitter Civil War which has haunted us for so long, my father was pushing his nine children straight into the future. "You have your heritage," he used to say, "some of it good, some not so good; and as far as I know, you had the usual number of grandmothers, grandfathers, etc. That is that. The past has been lived. It is gone. The future is yours. What are you going to do with it?" Always he asked this question of his children, and sometimes one knew the question was but an echo of an old question

he had spent his whole life trying to answer for himself. For always the future held my father's dreams . . . always he expected to find there what he spent his life searching for.

We lived much as do other Southerners, but our parents talked in Christian and democratic terms. We were told ten thousand times that "all men are brothers" . . . that we are a part of a democracy and must act like democrats . . . that the teachings of Jesus are real and could actually be practised if one were to try. We were taught that we were superior to hate and resentment and that no member of the Smith family could stoop so low as to have an enemy. No matter what injury was done one of us, we must not injure ourselves further by retaliating. We had family prayers once each day . . . all of us as children read through the Bible once each year . . . we memorized hundreds of Bible verses, said "sentence prayers" around the family table, or repeated verses at breakfast. God was not someone we met on Sunday at church but a permanent member of our household. And it never occurred to me until I was fourteen or fifteen years old that He did not see every act and thought of mine and chalk up the score on eternity's tablets.

Despite this somewhat burdensome strain of always living with God, the nine of us were strong, healthy, energetic youngsters who filled our days with play and sports and managed to live much of our lives on the animal level at which young lives should be lived.

Our mother was a wistful creature who loved beautiful things in a vague inarticulate way and who took good care of her children. We always knew this was not her world . . . but one she accepted under duress. Her private world we rarely were permitted to enter, any of us, but the shadow of it lay at times heavily on our hearts.

COMMON GROUND

My father owned large business interests, employed hundreds of Negroes and white laborers, paid them the prevailing low wages, worked them the prevailing long hours, built for them mill towns (colored and white), built for each group a church, saw to it that religion was plentifully supplied, that there was a commissary at which commodities were sold at a high price—and, in general, managed his affairs much as ten thousand other southern men managed theirs. I can still hear him chuckling as he told us how in his fight for prohibition he lined up the entire mill force of several hundred, gave each a little money, marched them in and voted liquor out of Hamilton County. It was a great day in his life. He had won the Big Game—a game he was always playing with himself against some evil. It did not occur to him to scrutinize the methods he employed in his fight against evil. Evil was to him a word written in capitals; the devil was smart; if you wanted to win you had to outsmart him. It was as simple as that to him. He was a practical, hard-headed, warm-hearted, high-spirited man, born during the Civil War, earning his own living at twelve, struggling through the bitter decades of Reconstruction and post-Reconstruction, through the Populist movement, on into the 20th century, with only scorn for those who pitied themselves or the South—scheming, dreaming his dreams, expanding his business, making and losing money, with never a doubt that God was always by his side whispering hunches to him as to how to pull off a successful deal. When he lost, it was his own fault; when he won, God had helped him. When the telegram was placed in his hands telling of the death of his beloved favorite son, he quietly gathered his children together, knelt down, and in a steady voice which contained no hint of his shattered life, loyally repeated: “God is our refuge and strength, a very present

help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed and though the mountains be carried into the sea.” On his death bed, he whispered to his old Business Associate up in Heaven: “*I have fought the fight; I have kept the faith.*”

Against this backdrop I want to tell a story of two children who learned to love each other and then saw each other no more.

A little white girl was found in the colored section of our small town, living with a Negro family. This family had recently moved to our town and little was known of them. The white clubwomen busied themselves in an attempt to do something about this child, and the Negro family were interviewed somewhat persistently for several days, until they grew frightened and, finally, evasive and silent. This only served to increase the suspicion of the white group, and at last the child was forcibly taken from her adopted family despite their tears and protests. She was brought to our home, mother having consented to look after the child temporarily since one more could so conveniently fit into our ample family pattern. Julie roomed with me, shared my bed, sat next to me at our table, wore my clothes, played with my dolls, and followed me around from morning to night, happily dazed by so many comforts and conveniences and pleasures. She was an affectionate little thing, and I was pleased by her adoration, and quickly a warm personal relationship grew up between us.

Then one day things changed. Word came from an orphanage. There were meetings and whispered conversations with my parents. Julie was quickly whisked away. There were no explanations. I questioned my mother. “Why did Julie have to go back when we have plenty of room? She likes us—she hardly knows them.” “Because,” Mother said gently,

GROWING INTO FREEDOM

"Julie is a little colored girl. She has to live in colored town." "But why? She lived here for three weeks." "She is a little colored girl," Mother repeated. "She's the same little girl she was yesterday," I remember saying to my mother, "and you said yourself Julie has nice manners. You said that," I persisted. "Yes," my mother said, "Julie is a nice child but she is colored. A colored child cannot live in our home." "She did live with us," I said, "and she is the same little girl she was yesterday. Can she come to see me? Spend the day?" "No." "I don't understand." "You're too young to understand," Mother said and turned away.

Yes, I was too young to understand. But I was not too young to feel the pain of separation from a little friend whom I never saw again, nor too young to make an identification with her shame and bewilderment, nor too young to begin to doubt my parents and the sincerity of their religion. I knew they had done something which did not fit in with their teachings, with what they said they held dear. I could not put this into words. I was too young, too inexperienced with the vocabulary of economic necessities, with that jargon of folkways, mores, slow change, which can dull the imagination so successfully. I only felt a profound reluctance ever again to accept something simply because it was told me by my elders. But though I felt burdened by doubts, by a loss of faith in my family's integrity, I practised the customs of my people just as I had always done. I had not the strength as a child to do otherwise.

The doubt remained, and the hurt. When people talked of love and Christianity, I knew they did not mean it. That is a hard thing for a child to learn. And as I grew older, as more experiences collected around this faithless day, tying on no doubt to far earlier and more profound

(though forgotten) experiences, I began to see myself and others like me as crippled people. I began to see that in trying to shut the Negro race away from us, we have shut ourselves away from the good, the creative, the human in life. The warping distorted frame we have put around every Negro child from birth is around every white child from birth also. Each is on a different side of the frame, but each is there. As in its twisting distorted form it shapes and cripples the life and personality of one, it is shaping and crippling the life and personality of the other. It would be difficult to decide which character is maimed the more—the white or the Negro—after living a life in the southern framework of segregation.

For the humiliation of the Negro is matched by the dull complacency of the white; Negro fear by white arrogance; hate by the cruel cheapening of human worth; ignorance by willful hypocrisy and blindness. Every illiterate Negro shut off from schooling is matched by a white who deliberately shuts himself away from knowledge and honest thinking; every sensitive, loving, perceptive Negro's hurt is equalled by the aching conflict between conscience and culture which the civilized Southerner endures all his life.

I began to see that even though, as we (white and black) acquire new knowledge, live through new experiences, we may, individual by individual, gain the strength to tear the frame from us, yet we are still stunted and crippled and can no more in our lifetime grow straight again than a tree put into a distorted steel-like frame when young and tender can grow tall and straight like free trees, when the frame is torn away at maturity. We may try. We may do clean, simple, decent things, we may say them, but we never do them or say them with a light heart, with a mind serene and sure. But always with a mind and spirit burdened with

COMMON GROUND

fear, fear of "doing harm," fear that maybe the others who are so certain they are right may be saying the truth, even though our intelligence, our knowledge, our heart, our spirit cry out that they are liars and cowards—just crippled people like ourselves who have not the strength to break the framework, even a little.

This deep inner conflict, this wearing fear of bringing disaster to the innocent is the price we pay for the privilege of being human in the Deep South. Some of us have made the choice and are willing to pay what is required of us.

But the price is too high. It must not be exacted of another generation. Somehow we must find a way to make it possible for a southern child to grow up now in freedom, to grow a personality strong and honest and creative and loving—and without fear. No child today in the South can grow that kind of personality. It is not possible in the rigid framework we put around them at birth.

Somehow we must realize that in keeping the black man in his place, we white Southerners are lynching the spirit of

every one of our children. We don't believe that now, down here. When we once believe, when we look at these children and assess the injury we have done them, we shall change. We shall stop talking so glibly about a vague democracy, a good life which we must bring about slowly, very slowly, for the future's children. We shall want it now today for our own—and we shall get it.

Lillian E. Smith is already familiar to readers of CG for two earlier pieces: "Burning Down Georgia's Back Porch," Winter 1942, and "Democracy Was Not a Candidate," included in the symposium on the Negro and the South in the Winter 1943 issue. A descendant of some of the earliest settlers of Georgia, she is now co-editor of *South Today*, a quarterly (Clayton, Georgia, \$1 a year), which is giving voice to "the good South—an intelligent, free, honest-thinking, creative, courageous South," which "is beginning to speak out." Her novel, *Strange Fruit*, will be published by Reynal and Hitchcock in the Fall.

THE AMERICAN WAY

Here are Americans, working, living, and playing together. Here color is only an incidental in the deeper and rewarding business of human relationships, in which friendship grows on the basis of mutuality, of like appreciations, and a man's ideas.

THE PRACTICE OF CITIZENSHIP

ARCHIBALD MacLEISH

OUR great-grandfathers seem to have held the view that citizenship in a self-governing country was something you worked at, the way you worked at your job, but more seriously. American citizenship was not only an honor—and it was indeed an honor in their eyes—it was an occupation also.

That view, needless to say, is no longer prevalent. We learned in the years before the last great war, and in the years immediately after, what the serious business of life really is. A man practised law, or he practised farming, or he practised banking or broking, or business generally, but he did not practise citizenship. Citizenship was something that happened once a year, or once every four years, like an anniversary, or a day off—which you either took or you didn't take, as the serious business of life permitted. For the rest, twenty minutes a day with a good newspaper, if you happened to live in a town where a good newspaper was published, satisfied the calls of duty—until radio came in, when the twenty minutes were cut to five.

The duties of citizenship, like all the rest of the world's chores, were mechanized and mass-produced. We learned to govern ourselves by sitting with relaxed abdominal muscles in a comfortable chair, reading the opinion polls which told us what we thought. We learned to govern ourselves by pushing open the front screen door before breakfast and picking up the opinions of somebody else. We learned to govern ourselves eventually by switching a dial which saved us the trouble of push-

ing open the front screen door. We would no more have thought of working at citizenship as a serious occupation than we would have thought of working at the biological, agronomic, engineering, and traffic problems involved in the semi-automatic delivery of the morning's milk. And for very similar reasons. Our opinions, like the milk, were delivered promptly and regularly in disposable containers with the maximum of sanitary protection and the minimum of noise.

I do not wish to exaggerate. We honored citizenship. Certainly we honored it. We were insistent that the history books our children read should speak eloquently of the duties of citizenship. We were respectful of the fact that the ancestors of some of us had worked harder at their citizenship than they worked at their Virginia plantations or their New England factories—and that some of their plantations were ruined in consequence. After all, a free man's citizenship in those days was a risky thing, and men were right to work at it, sitting late in the Virginia night in the circle of the single candle with the oaks overhead in the dark wind. Jefferson and his friends had liberty to assure, freedom to justify. Self-government was on trial before the world, and the citizenship of freedom was an arduous and even a dangerous task, like travel in those horse-drawn days—like other difficult duties long since reduced to the simplicity of ease by the inventiveness of our mechanics, plumbers, engineers, typesetters, electricians, and other instruments

of progress. Today citizenship in America is a going concern, and the notion of a contemporary American taking his duties so seriously that he read at his citizenship as a man might read at the law—the notion of a contemporary American citizen taking his citizenship as a personal responsibility—is a notion no one would expect to hear advanced except in a commencement address at some serious-minded college—probably for women.

And yet the notion is not altogether fantastic even now. On the contrary, there seems to be an expectation in this country at this moment, an expectation which amounts in some quarters almost to a desperate demand, that citizenship should again be practised in America. Those, to be specific, who concern themselves, in government and out, with the problems of the peace, seem to expect of the American people, in their capacity as citizens, decisions which only the most earnest and devoted practice of the profession of the citizen could achieve.

Again and again, in public debate and in private conversation, appeal is made to the opinions, known or imagined, of the citizens of the United States. "The American people would never stand for. . . ." "The American people expect. . . ." "The American people are determined. . . ." All of which means in essence nothing else but this: that those who are charged with responsibility for the consideration of the peace remember very well the fiasco of twenty-five years ago—remember very well not only the vanity of a Senator from Massachusetts but the state of public opinion which made it possible for that vanity to triumph over the hope of the world and thus commit our generation to a second war. They are determined that this time the people of this country shall play their proper part. Which means they are determined that

the American people as the American people—not as the constituents of their representatives in Congress but as themselves—shall take an active and a responsible part in the consideration of what is surely the most difficult, confused, and complicated of all the problems history has presented to mankind.

—That this determination is well taken there can be, I think, no doubt. History as well as logic supports it. A self-governing people must either participate actively in the making of the decisions which determine its destiny, or its destiny will not be determined. But there can equally be no doubt, if the activities of the last few months are relevant, that the determination that the American people should participate in the peace has not been thought through to the necessary conclusions or the appropriate consequences. Gentlemen in Washington and gentlemen elsewhere—official as well as unofficial students of the peace—await the participation of the people in the decisions to be made. But *what* participation, neither they nor anyone has thus far said.

We receive—hundreds of thousands of us at least receive—innumerable pamphlets, leaflets, reprints, learned articles dealing with questions of world organization, of raw materials, of air transportation, of international trade, of the punishment of war criminals, of the partition of Germany. Are we, as self-governing citizens of this Republic, and in our capacity as citizens, to make up our minds on questions such as these? Are we to reach conclusions satisfactory to ourselves on the twenty-five debatable frontiers of Europe? Are we to reconsider Trieste, to settle the Polish corridor, to determine the future of Formosa? Is it our duty to resolve the problem of the Dutch-Colonial possessions?—the British? Will we be doing less than our full duty if we fail to decide

what we think about gold, about war debts, about air ports? But if it is not this that is expected of us, what then is expected? And by whom is this expectation entertained? And what reciprocal duties, if any, are borne by those who expect these actions of us, who await their performance at our hands?

This, I submit, is a question of considerable relevance to the proposition, expressed or implied, that the American people, as the American people, must participate in the making of the peace, must express their opinion, must assert their position, must declare their will. The American people, I imagine, are willing enough to do all those things. Certainly they have never been reluctant in the past, and they do not appear to be reluctant now. Lecture audiences, I am told, regularly demand of their lecturer these days what *they* can do—what each one of them can do about it. The lecturer doubtless has his answer, but those to whom the question really is addressed have yet, so far as I know, to reply. The people's representatives, including those who wait most articulately upon their determinations and decisions, have never yet, so far as I can now recall, informed the people what it is that they await. The consequence is the situation we are beginning to perceive—a situation bad enough as it is and rapidly becoming worse.

The consequence is, first, a sense of frustration which is largely responsible for the increasingly hopeless opinion that a real peace, a workable peace, a creative peace cannot be made; and, second, a certain paralysis of will and of determination in government itself. Government waits upon the people for decisions which the people do not make because they have not been asked to make them, and the people wait on government for indications of governmental purpose and direction which will present the kind of issue on

which the people can express their views. Government, recalling the dead end of 1919, waits for the people to precede it through the hoped-for door, and the people, uncertain whether the door has now been opened, wait for the government to invite them through. The consequent bowing and scraping is doubtless a heartening sight to those who hope that nothing much will happen when the war ends beyond the silencing of the guns, but for the rest of the world which has been told, and which believes, that a decent peace can be made if we are men enough to make it, the spectacle is hardly edifying.

What is obviously required and what is required very soon, is a common agreement between the people and their government as to their respective obligations in the making of the peace—or, more precisely, in the shaping of the national purpose which the peace is to reflect. If government is unwilling, understandably unwilling, to tell the people what their commitments are to be, and if the people are unable, practically unable, to elaborate their commitments in a convention of a hundred and thirty million voices, then a division of function would seem to be required.

But a division of function is not only conceivable: it is more or less self-evident. Certain aspects of the business clearly belong to government because government alone is physically capable of dealing with them. Other aspects belong to the people because the people, and only the people, have the right to decide them. The first are those aspects of the national purpose which have to do with feasibility, with ways and means; the second are those which have to do with ultimate objectives. The citizens as citizens cannot resolve boundary disputes or frame international organizations: it is indeed because they cannot dispose of such questions directly in their capacity as citizens that they elect,

COMMON GROUND

or indirectly appoint, representatives to act on their behalf. But by the same sign, the government as government, whether elected or appointed, cannot experience for the nation the nation's deep and profoundly-felt desires: indeed it was precisely because governments are incapable of living for their people that governments by the people were established on this earth.

Both as a matter of history, therefore, and as a matter of practice, the theoretical division of duties is clear. It is the duty of a self-governing people to determine responsibly and answerably what they wish. It is the duty of their representatives in government to give their wishes substance. But though the theoretical division of duties is clear—is indeed so clear as to be transparent and therefore to be frequently forgotten—the implications of that theoretical division are not, apparently, so obvious. The implications are that the issues kept before the people by their leaders for discussion and debate will be the issues of principle, the moral issues, the issues of basic choice, and that a part at least of the responsibility of the people's representatives in government will be the responsibility to assure themselves that these issues have been considered by the people and that the people have declared their minds.

For the obligations of the people in this division of obligations—the duty of each citizen individually, and of a majority of the citizens collectively, to arrive at a responsible and considered and firm conclusion as to the declared end, the wished-for outcome—is, of all the duties of living men, the most difficult to perform. Compared with it the duty of officers of government to find solutions for specific problems of ways and means—even the most complicated problems of currency, problems of trade, problems of frontiers, of courts, of armies—are light indeed. There are theo-

retical solutions by the dozens for most of the specific problems of the peace, and quite a number of them, conceivably, would work: what still awaits solution is the problem of the kind of peace we want.

We have learned the answers, all the answers:

It is the question that we do not know.

All of us who have lived long enough to move out into the frontier regions of responsible choice know of our own knowledge how difficult it is to be clear, to be certain, to be convinced even in the most intimate, the most personal, decisions of our own lives. The more we have felt, the more we think we have learned, the more doubtful of ultimate certainty we become until we end up, some of us, in that permanent state of elevated indecision known as the objective mind. But what is true of private choice is true, with even greater force, of public choice. Except in those narrow and desperate necessities where a nation chooses between resistance and destruction—between life and death—the shaping and hardening of a common national will, a common national purpose, is the most difficult and arduous of political actions.

We have lessons enough of that in our own history, both in the earliest and in the latest days. What we mean when we speak of the Japanese attack upon Pearl Harbor as an Axis error of inconceivable stupidity is precisely that Pearl Harbor presented us with a narrow and necessary choice which not even the propaganda of fascism in front of us nor the propaganda of isolationism at our backs could conceal or darken. What we mean when we speak of the Declaration of Independence as one of the greatest of the political acts of men is quite simply that the Declaration's drafting, and its acceptance by the Congress, at a time when other possibilities were open, or were believed to be, was an

THE PRACTICE OF CITIZENSHIP

action of affirmative and determined choice almost without precedent in any history.

The difficulty of decision has not been lessened for the people of this country in the making of the peace as it was lessened for them in the making of the war. Events have not narrowed the issue of the future as the events of Pearl Harbor narrowed the issue of the past, nor have the people's leaders yet presented to the people such a declaration of principle and such a proposal for action as Thomas Jefferson and John Adams and Franklin and Livingston and Sherman presented to the people of this country in July of 1776. We have before us in the making of the peace a greater probable latitude of election than any earlier generation has ever had in such a venture. We have, and we are conscious that we have, a new world to raise upon the ruins of a world now fallen. We have, and we know that we have, the means to make that new world what we desire to make it—if we can find the power to desire. The nature of man, the nature of ourselves as men, may limit us, but nothing else—neither distances, nor lack of skill, nor poverty of knowledge or of strength—can restrict our freedom to determine what we want.

But if events have not narrowed negatively the field of choice, and if no Jefferson, no Wythe, no Mason, has exercised in moral terms, in terms of principle, the leadership of affirmation, the basic issue for decision by the people of this country is nevertheless not doubtful. If it is obscured at all, it is obscured not by its strangeness but its familiarity. Democracy is a word so common on our tongues, so frequent in our ears, that it has lost not only its significance but its meaning. Fascism is a word of as much precision—and as little—as the words for cruelty and evil. And yet the issue for the peace, like the issue for the war, is precisely what we

have said so often that it was—the issue between these two—the issue between fascism and democracy. And the real decision of principle, decision of morality, for the people of the United States to make, is whether they do, actually and in sober earnest, intend to have a democratic world—intend to have a world in which democracy can live and be itself and flourish. For if they want it, they can have it. And unless they want it—want it with their will as well as with their words—they will not only fail to have it: they will have, as certainly as night comes out of dusk, its opposite. The name of which they know.

The plain truth of the entire fog of talk is this: that we can have democracy if we really want democracy enough to have it. We can destroy fascism if we really hate fascism sufficiently to root it out. But the choice between the two is a sober and searching choice, for it involves, so far as the people, who are the real and ultimate rulers of this country, are concerned, a searching and a sober decision. You cannot choose between fascism and democracy on the cheap and self-deluding basis of the oratorical distinctions. You cannot choose between them by saying Yes, you love freedom, or No, you hate tyranny. You can only choose between them by an act of affirmative choice which recognizes what it is it chooses.

The Nazis chose fascism on this basis. They saw, cynically if you will but realistically, notwithstanding, what it was they had elected to accomplish. We must choose democracy, if we elect to choose it, with at least an equal understanding of our choice. We must understand that if we choose democracy as against fascism we are not choosing “the world before the war.” “The world before the war” was not democracy. Indeed it was precisely because the world before the war was not democracy that the Communists and the

COMMON GROUND

Fascists were able to attack it. We must understand that the democracy we are electing in opposition to fascism is the democracy which is fascism's opposite, the democracy which excludes fascism—democracy itself.

We must understand, moreover, that our choice of democracy—the sober, realistic and meaningful choice of democracy—will inevitably draw with it other choices, abroad as well as here. You cannot seriously choose democracy without choosing at the same time a world in which democracy can live. President Wilson's phrase about a world safe for democracy was truer than those who used it in 1917 and discarded it in 1919 knew: truer perhaps than Wilson himself imagined. It is one of the curious characteristics of human life, public as well as private, that the principal things it has to teach us are the things we thought we knew. We thought we knew, because we so frequently said, that the world must be made safe for democracy. We have now learned that democracy can be safe only in a world which will never, at any moment, compromise the basic principles on which democracy is founded.

But the question still remains whether our hard-won knowledge will direct our acts. Having determined that it is truly democracy we want, are we willing to push that determination to its necessary conclusion? Are we willing to say and, more than that, are we willing to mean, that the world must henceforth be a world in which conspiracies against democracy such as the Nazi-fascist conspiracy of the 1930s shall not be permitted to make head and gather power anywhere? Are we willing to decide, once and for all and finally and intending what we say,

that the world must henceforth be a world in which violations of freedom, like the Nazi-fascist violation of the freedom of the people of Spain, will be resisted wherever they occur, however they disguise themselves?

For unless we are willing to say these things and mean them, our declaration of democratic purpose will be a declaration of democratic wishful thinking and pious hope. To prefer democracy to fascism is easy enough—as easy as preferring good to evil. But to prefer democracy to fascism and to determine, with a full and sober understanding of what the determination means, that democracy shall actually be accomplished and that fascism shall truly be destroyed, is something much more serious and much more grave.

It is that grave and serious choice which is the real choice before our generation in this country. And it is that choice the people and not the government of this country must now make. The duties of citizenship become in our time the duties of decision. The young men and young women of this country who take those duties up with war around them and the hope of peace ahead will know far better than their elders what depends upon their act of will. Citizenship in this Republic was considered a great honor by those who bore it first. It will be counted a great honor once again if those who bear it now will exercise its rights and duties with a solemn understanding of the meaning of the choice they are about to make.

This was an address by Archibald MacLeish, Librarian of Congress, delivered before the graduating class of Sarah Lawrence College in late May.

THE FLYING AFRICANS

KENNETH PORTER

THE PLANTATION BARGE had not reached the wharf—it was not indeed, long from the slave ship moored in a secret harbor to avoid patrol vessels—when it was known in the quarters that there were Ibos on board.

Perhaps the boat, rowing upriver, had at points hugged the shore so closely that plantation hands could discern the Ibo tribal scars, or at least so near that a shout could carry. Perhaps there were drums hidden in the swamps. There was curiosity among the tribesmen, sitting at their doorsteps over the evening meal—some themselves only a few years from the Coast—as to what acquaintances or friends, what relatives even, what enemies perhaps, might be among the newcomers.

But none was prepared for the tall powerful figure with the set face and blazing eyes whom the overseer herded, first of three, into the compound.

Quaco, a man without reverence, was first to recover. "Oho! Are sorcerers' eyes then so dull they cannot discern the snare in the trail?"

"The old lion leaped into the pit to find the way his cubs went," the other returned calmly.

"When the ship anchored and put out a red flag," one of the newcomers explained later, "we went out in canoes to trade. They took us into the cabin and gave us *tafia*, and when we awoke we were at sea. Certain of us leaped overboard to return to our homes, so they chained the rest in the hold and

allowed us on deck only in fetters. It was the half-caste linkster, it seems, who proposed that the white men thus complete their cargo, but he himself profited little, for in mid-passage, it is said, he endeavored to walk upon the sea after the manner of their prophet, and sank."

Narrator and listeners glanced involuntarily, and almost simultaneously, to where the witch man sat impassively on a log, staring into the cooking fire, the light shining on his muscled shoulders and scarred chest.

As on all well-conducted plantations, the new arrivals were given a week or so of "seasoning" to accustom themselves to their surroundings before being put to work. But at last the day came when the overseer led them into the field, handed them hoes, and gave them their orders, in the few words of "Congo"—the West Coast pidgin—that were necessary. The older in slavery looked furtively at the witch man as he stood hoe in hand but, after a moment, he began to wield it with contemptuously accurate strokes.

"It has been said," remarked Quaco in a loud voice as they crossed one another, "that Certain Persons have the power to cause their tools to work by themselves."

"The hoe must be taught its way in new soil before it can walk alone," replied the other, maintaining the rhythm of his strokes.

So the days passed. None knew how his mind, which, ever since he woke in the

COMMON GROUND

ship's hold, he had striven to keep tight against the old life, was giving way—memories pouring in as water into a leaky canoe. At night in his cabin the impassive countenance, which in the presence of men he wore as a wooden ceremonial mask, slipped, crumbled, and he lay awake for hours, straining his ears for the chattering of monkeys, the screeching of parakeets, the throbbing of the forbidden drums. The swine flesh, the maize gruel, began to writhe and leap in his belly.

There came a day when in mid-afternoon, in mid-row, he dashed his hoe to the ground and stood staring desperately eastward as if his eyes might grapple the horizon and draw to him what was beyond. The overseer strode toward him, rasping curses, whip raised; but the sorcerer turned, and what was in his face caused the arm of the white man, despite the pistol in his belt, to swerve, so that the lash cut the air instead of falling on flesh, and the man slouched swaggeringly on, his curses falling to a grumble. For the rest of the day the witch man sat under a tree, alternately gazing into the sky and making marks on the palm-smoothed earth. By next morning a plantation on either side knew that the Ibo witch man had with a look made powerless the arm of the overseer, and that his hoe had worked all the afternoon alone.

That night, after the evening meal, the sorcerer suddenly arose among his fellow-tribesmen. "Ibosi!" he announced. "I grow weary of this place. I am returning to Africa. Those who desire may go with me."

There was a period of stunned silence.

"How shall this be done, Oh, Great One?" cautiously inquired at last the elder.

"Have ye not heard that Certain People can go from place to place through the air, as the flamingoes? I shall fly, certainly—and ye with me! Do ye doubt?"

There was an excited babble of denial. "No, no, it is true. . . . It is well known. . . . My mother has said. . . . My father told me. . . . My grandmother saw. . . . It was said of my grandfather's brother. . . ."

"Very well. No one doubts. It is decided."

"There are certain preparations to be made?"

"Yes. Provide the black chickens. Drums also."

"Drums are forbidden," the elder replied thoughtfully.

"And the cattle-pen to the lion. Drums are necessary."

"I know of a fallen bee-gum," ventured one.

"Skins will be provided," was the brief word of a long-limbed fellow, suspected of having a bow in a hollow tree.

"Good. Let that which is necessary be prepared."

"And the day?"

"The morning of the day sacred to their god, when we are not in the fields, and at sunrise, that we may have light for the journey. Let the word go to the Ibos on other plantations."

He turned on his heel and entered his cabin.

On the nights which followed he withdrew from the circle immediately after the evening meal and spent the hours until the driver made his rounds casting the bones again and again on the packed earth of the floor, examining them carefully after each throw by the light of a fat pine splinter stuck between the logs. They gave no clear answer. They were saying something, it was sure, and something not altogether unfavorable; the road was shadowy—shadowy rather than dark—but the moonlight did not stream down it, and leopards might lurk in the bushes, serpents hang from the limbs.

THE FLYING AFRICANS

After the driver had passed and the light was extinguished, he lay upon the straw and stared unseeingly at the rafters. To fly! He had never doubted before. He was a wizard, and it was well known that wizards could fly, even as they could cast a spell for good or evil. Only, to fly had never before seemed to him necessary or advisable—even desirable. He remembered that sometimes, at a dance, among the leaping flames, the throbbing drums, the chanting, it had seemed that his feet were not moving on the packed dance ground but in air, and he had thought at the time, incuriously, unexcitedly, "Yes, this is how one feels just before rising into the sky," but he had never actually attempted it. And with a stab of fearful uncertainty he recalled that even flying wizards did not share their power with others—though he did recall a story of their flying with one person under each arm. But when he had spoken to the Ibos in the compound, the words had been put into his mouth.

He sat upright on his pallet. A figure was blocking out the moonlight. "Oh, Great One!" came a husky young whisper.

"Enter and sit," he replied ritualistically. Then, after a sufficient pause, "Speak, young one." The moonlight fell on the face of a boy of about fourteen.

"Oh, Mighty One, it is whispered that thou and the Ibos are to return, flying, to their own country. Now, I am Ibo by blood, but born in this land, of parents born in the Ibo country. Is this word for me also?"

"Thy parents—where are they?"

"Dead. Dead. My mother—the overseer sent her into the field too soon after she bore me. The master was angry with the overseer, for he said my mother was worth a great sum, even eight hundred dollars. My father was angry also, so that presently the overseer lay in a furrow with his skull halved and my father was in the

swamps. But there came a season when the whites hunted the swamps with dogs and many men, and they brought him in across a horse, the bones of his legs broken by lead. They were minded to keep him until the bones were mended and he could walk, that they might choke him with a rope, publicly; but he, not caring to be a spectacle for the white men, resolved to die otherwise, and did so, though his hands were tied. . . ." He paused, choking; then, after a little, continued. "He swallowed his tongue."

The sorcerer half put out his hand, then withdrew it, unseen. "Verily, thy father was an Ibo! And thou, too, art an Ibo!"

"Then, I may. . . ?"

"Yea, boy. What knowest thou of Africa?"

"Only what my foster-parents, now dead—Ibos also—have told me."

"Think of it, then. See in thy mind the palmetto huts and the fields springing green seven years without planting. Hear the sound of the jungle, the monkeys chattering, the screaming of parakeets. Listen to the throbbing of the drums, the feet of the dancers. Smell the cooking fires. Hear the adze and the hammer as they shape wood and metal to the will of the workers. Think of the Ibo people. Think most of all of thy mother in labor, thy father in the swamps. Remember them both at the hour of their deaths. Thou too art an Ibo. Thou shalt see Africa!"

When the boy had gone, the witch man lay again on his back, eyes wide and unseeing. "We shall fly! Yea, we shall fly!" he whispered. He turned on his side and slept.

In the old field above the river that Sunday morning, just before dawn, the witch man numbered his followers: his own two companions of the voyage, the four earlier at the plantation—including

COMMON GROUND

even Quaco, two from the upper plantation, three from the lower, the boy from across the river. All were ceremonially painted, amulets at throat, rattles at wrist.

He raised his hand, and the drums began to pound like a distant cataract beating on the rocks, the rattles pouring through it the sound of a rushing torrent. They began to circle, at first slowly, then faster and wilder and faster. The drums picked them up and carried them along; the rattles sustained them. He felt the Power coming upon him. His head grew lighter and lighter—was one in substance with the air; his chest and belly followed, his loins, his thighs and legs, his ankles. The faces of his companions showed they were caught up with him.

"Forward! Run forward!" he cried. "We shall mount up like the buzzards!"

He ran, scarcely feeling his feet upon the ground. Then he felt them no more at all. They had left the earth and the air was bearing them up!

And then his feet were pounding, stumbling, on hard-baked earth and dried clods. . . .

He came to a stop, his chest heaving. His eyes moved around the crestfallen circle. "This air, it seems, is too thin for flying," he commented with wry casualness.

Then he straightened, chest expanding, eyes blazing. "Only one trail is open." He gestured toward the river pouring its flood toward the sea, the sea which lapped the shore of the Ibo country.

Quaco managed a sickly smile. "It is

too far," he muttered. "We will get foot-sore!"

"Return, then." The witch man jerked his chin toward the quarters. "Thy mother was a Mandingo!"

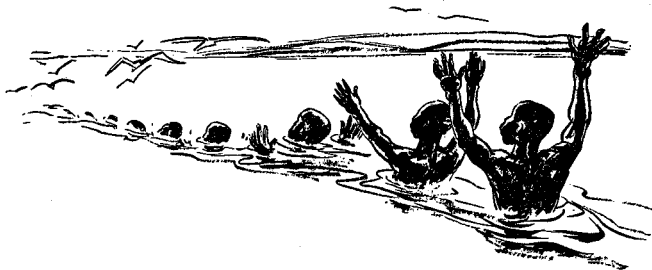
He turned to the others, then swept the landscape with his gaze. They looked with him, and after that brief glance at their own, the Ibo, country this land was of a sudden unspeakably drab and evil. The drums began to throb, softly, insistently. Stiffly, stepping high and jerkily, as men sleep-walking, the line moved down the slope. An Ibo song began and passed from one to the other until all were singing.

The witch man extended a hand and took the boy's in his. A smile moulded his face into new unfamiliar lines. "Come, lion's cub!" he said gently.

The other slaves, watching from a distance in fascination and horror, agreed that the drumming and the Ibo singing never faltered and were clearly heard as long as the line of heads could be seen above the water—some said until long after. A few were able to see, far out in midstream, a flock of great water birds take flight and wing their way into the rising sun, with exultant cries.

Kenneth Porter is a member of the history department at Vassar College. His hobby is resurrecting from obscure quarters evidences of the universality and persistence of the struggle for freedom in the United States.

The illustrator is Bernadine Custer.



OUR HUMILIATION—NOT THEIRS

BRUNO LASKER

ALL CHINESE KNOW," Pearl Buck recently told the House Committee on Immigration and Naturalization at hearings on various proposals to repeal our Chinese exclusion laws, "of the ugly and inexcusable humiliation which Chinese suffer even when they are coming in on a visitor's visa, or are citizens of this country coming home again. The Chinese know these things very well."

Other witnesses stressed the use made of these laws, not only by Japanese propagandists but also by Chinese reactionaries, to implant doubt in the Chinese as to the sincerity of their Occidental allies in a war ostensibly fought for world democracy. Faith in us has so far carried the soldiers and peasants and workers of China through many a bad day in their seven years' war against Japanese aggression. If that faith is not complete, if mischief-makers see an opening to alienate the sympathy of the Chinese from their allies, then are we Americans not most to blame? For their faith involves not just an expectation of material aid from us but the application of those principles of democracy and equality which they believe to be our aim and guide.

The Chinese know, or think they know, from almost a century of limited contact with us, that at a critical moment they can count on the regard we have usually shown for common decency, on our preference for working with weaker peoples rather than kicking them about, for the use of reason rather than of superior might. Now, when for the first time they

stand before the world as a united nation, eager to take their full share in defending the common security of mankind, as well as their own, at this critical moment they expect us to live up to our principles.

A year ago we relinquished those special privileges of extra-territoriality for American citizens in China, privileges which were both a result and a continuing cause of the inequality in the political status of the two nations. The Chinese had no similar privileges among us. Their citizens when resident here could not escape the competency of our American courts and place themselves under the jurisdiction of a Chinese consular court. They could not claim exemption from our laws and our taxes by living in a closed settlement that recognized only Chinese law and Chinese obligations of citizenship. As a matter of fact, we have never liked the arrangement of extra-territoriality, from which we were supposed to benefit in China but which actually, and especially in recent times, cut us off from a good deal of opportunity in that country. We adopted it only, as others had done before, because during the long period of unrest and civil strife life in China was unsafe for foreigners away from the protection of their own institutions. When Great Britain and the United States renounced these special privileges in principle, the Chinese people felt more than ever on the way toward full recognition as equals with all the free peoples of the world.

But they knew that real equality had

COMMON GROUND

not yet been achieved. If any were over-enthusiastic in their acclaim of a new era in their relations with the two great Western powers, the Tokyo broadcaster soon dampened their spirit.

"While white people are free to live in China," he told them over and over again, "the Chinese cannot enter the United States. . . . The few Chinese who are temporarily permitted to enter the United States, such as international merchants, professional men, and tourists, are forced to undergo the most humiliating and discourteous treatment and detention at various immigration stations. They are practically treated as a class apart from the rest of humanity. . . .

"The Chungking authorities must also know that the Chinese are rigidly excluded from attaining American citizenship by naturalization, a right which is accorded to the lowliest immigrant from Europe."

Of course, the Chungking authorities do know this. So do all Chinese who can read a newspaper or who listen to broadcasts over the public radio receiving stations set up all over Free China.

The Chinese are a proud people. Like Americans, most of them consider their own country the best in the world and their own way of life superior to all others. They have no wish to emigrate if they can make even the most modest living at home. Above all, they have no wish to live among people who look down upon them and refuse them those simple courtesies to which they are accustomed and which they regard as a hallmark of civilized conduct. They know that even if all legal obstacles to their admission to this country were removed, social and economic discriminations against them would not immediately disappear; only the most intrepid and those with the most urgent reasons would wish to come.

"China," writes a Chinese who has

studied his countrymen's frame of mind, "has consented to the request of the American Government restricting the coming of Chinese laborers. She has not objected to the general immigration laws imposing restrictions upon her citizens. But as a nation of nearly five thousand years' civilization, she does resent the implication of inferiority."

That implication is inescapable in a number of our laws which single out the Chinese for treatment distinct from that accorded other aliens, white or colored. The Chinese were at first excluded under a principle of mutuality. Our treaty of 1868 with China, the so-called Burlingame Treaty, recognized the right of all classes of Chinese to reside in the United States but laid the foundation for reasonable future restrictions by stressing the mutuality of the relations between the countries in this matter. The treaty of 1880 included a clause permitting this country to restrict Chinese labor immigration—this in response to growing agitation on the Pacific Coast after the boom-time demand for labor had exhausted itself. Still it was in tone a gentlemen's agreement; its wording and implications were not derogatory to the dignity of the Chinese people. The Chinese government at that time realized, as does the government of the present day, that our bread-winners had a right to protect their sources of income and their living standards by not permitting others to come in who would work for less.

It was only subsequently, in the Immigration Act of 1882 and in the succession of restrictive laws which followed it, that all pretense of mutuality was abandoned and the Chinese were forced to swallow the bitter pill of humiliation. They were the only people singled out by name for discriminatory treatment and exclusion. With each enactment, restrictions against them were increased. From

OUR HUMILIATION—NOT THEIRS

regulation the legislators passed to limitation, from limitation to temporary suspension and, in the end, to permanent prohibition. In recent years, the conditions under which even distinguished Chinese or Chinese relatives of respected American citizens could enter the country—when they belonged to one of the exempt classes and had the right to do so—the inquisitions to which they were exposed, the costs, the limitations placed on their freedom—these were little short of open insult.

It is to remove these barriers to friendly relations between the two countries, and not to admit large numbers of Chinese laborers, that present legislative proposals before Congress are directed. These proposals intend, in one way or other, to remove from the statute book those laws and clauses of laws which single out the Chinese for discriminatory treatment, either as nationals of China or as members of a racial group, or as coming from a particular, arbitrarily defined geographical area. During the present Congressional session, soon to re-assemble in Washington, a number of bills have been introduced to effect that change in whole or in part.

Just before its adjournment in June, the House Committee on Immigration and Naturalization had before it the most recent of these bills, H.R. 3070, introduced by Mr. Magnuson of the state of Washington. In its main provisions it is similar to a bill previously introduced by Congressman Gossett of Texas. It repeals the original Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 and the fourteen additional laws or sections of laws passed between that date and 1913, each designed to sharpen the restrictions previously enacted or to make their enforcement more effective. It also amends the Nationality Act of 1940 to make "Chinese persons or persons of

Chinese descent" in the United States eligible for naturalization. Such eligibility would automatically place China, under the 1924 Immigration Act, on the same quota basis as European countries. But Mr. Magnuson also proposes that, with minor exceptions, all Chinese persons entering the United States as immigrants shall be charged against the annual quota for China, no matter where they were born, or what their nationality, or whether they are the wives or minor children of American citizens, and that three-fourths of the quota shall be assigned by preference to Chinese born and resident in China.

The importance attached to this whole question by the Chinese springs from their concern to remove the stigma of discrimination rather than from any desire to have their nationals come to this country in large numbers. According to one Chinese writer, our refusal to naturalize Chinese immigrants is "the only important issue now between China and the United States." Eligibility to naturalization is, in fact, the part of the proposed legislation that would effect the most appreciable, concrete change; for the Magnuson bill or one of the several similar bills that have been introduced would not, if passed, admit to the United States more than 107 (the maximum quota allowed under the percentage basis of the 1924 Act) of those Chinese who could surmount all the other hurdles of our immigration laws. Even if this bill were made law, it would be only an incomplete gesture of our wish to remove the stigma of Chinese undesirability; some discriminations would remain. The United States, for instance, would still refuse admission as a non-quota immigrant to anyone of Chinese descent born in Peru or Mexico or Canada, even though he came as a national of such country, with a passport from its government. Americans of Chi-

COMMON GROUND

nese descent still would be prevented from bringing to this country, outside the quota, their wives or minor children—a right enjoyed by other nationals. Admission would still be refused to all Chinese coming from Singapore or Batavia or Bombay—from that “barred zone” in southern Asia from which all immigration, except for teachers, students, and certain professional groups, was cut off by the Immigration Act of 1917. And that same law, incidentally, would continue to exclude Chinese coming from the western part of China itself—the very section in the southwest of the country which is now in process of economic development and with which, as soon as access by road or railroad is re-established, we shall want to do business! In short, in spite of their important gains, the Magnuson and similar bills would be an incomplete step in the direction of real equality.

In spite of these limitations, it is far from certain that even the modest bill fathered by Representative Magnuson will be reported by the Committee or, if so reported, passed by both houses of Congress. Why?

For one thing, many Congressmen and those among their constituents who influence them most cannot get over the fear that even so limited a measure of justice to the Chinese—one which could not be used to admit more than 107 of them in any one year—would become an “entering wedge” for Oriental mass immigration. There is no real ground for this fear. Even among the staunchest advocates of international equality of treatment under our immigration and naturalization law, there are hardly any who would abandon our quota system or, by otherwise lowering the bars, complicate after the war the difficult task of re-absorbing our mobilized manpower in the normal economic life of the country.

Then there are those who look upon the proposed change in the immigration law as a rather futile gesture of friendship which the Chinese people would not appreciate. Far better, they say, to speed up our material aid to China as much as we can. This kind of argument misunderstands Chinese psychology and even China’s concrete immediate needs. Prestige means more than wealth just now, more than physical comfort. A sense of assured equality with the other great powers with which the Chinese nation is now associated, translated into heightened incentive, counts as much as shiploads of munitions, which we are unable just now to deliver. Anything that will heighten the morale of the Chinese people is protection for us against the possibility that in some military or political crisis the nefarious Pan-Asiatic preachment may gain ground in China—the preachment that the “yellow” peoples, or even all the colored peoples of the world, must band together against the white man’s insolence and desire for world domination. Overt recognition on our part, in every practicable way, of a new world situation in which peoples of many colors work together for security and progress on a basis of essential equality will not only help bring the war to an earlier conclusion but will pave the way for wholehearted international and interracial collaboration in the period of reconstruction.

Associated with the opposition just described is the view that this is a bad time to “tamper with” our immigration law. While we are engaged in war, the argument runs, Congress should refrain from raising issues that might lessen the unity of our own people who are known to be divided on questions of immigration. This argument overlooks the fact that the repeal proposal is itself a war measure. Those who use it themselves introduce the controversial issue of our immigration poli-

OUR HUMILIATION—NOT THEIRS

cy as a whole. There is no such issue if discussion is limited to the actual provisions of the proposed legislation. The Magnuson Bill, for example, does not change our present quota system. It is designed solely to correct an injustice to a particular nation and could not be used to add more than a hundred or so to the number of aliens entitled to admission to the United States. Moreover, it is precisely concern for our internal unity that makes the passage of such a law particularly appropriate in wartime. For, while a bill for the repeal of Chinese exclusion affects only one of America's racial elements, its passage would have the effect of persuading members of other disadvantaged groups—Negroes and Spanish Americans, for example—that their grievances, too, will receive the attention of Congress and be dealt with in the same spirit of fair play. Thus they would co-operate even more cheerfully than now in the common task of ridding the world of tyrants.

Then there are those who believe that to concede the Chinese equality now under our immigration law would at once produce a clamor for similar recognition from other Oriental peoples. Those who argue in this way seem to forget that the Japanese war lords have not been slow to recognize the dynamic hidden in the discriminatory immigration and naturalization laws of Western powers and have used it throughout the area they now occupy to arouse sentiment against the United Nations. Their radio spokesmen have been heard to use our American immigration laws and practices to drive home their thesis that our espousal of democracy is hypocrisy; that a victory of the United Nations will only the more firmly clamp upon the peoples of the Indies, of Malaya, Indo-China, and the Philippines the lid of oppression from which they have suffered in the past.

Most thoughtful Americans will agree

that sooner or later all racial discriminations as such must be removed from our immigration and naturalization laws. We want to live at peace with all the world; we wish to remove as far as lies in our power the danger of a third world war which, as has again been pointed out by Lin Yutang in his most recent book, would almost certainly take on the features of a rebellion of colored peoples against the white man's domination. But this does not mean that great numbers of people with very different living standards must be admitted to this country, or that the repeal of Chinese exclusion now makes it necessary at the same time to remove the barriers against other Asiatics. At the moment the case of China is the most urgent. The Chinese more especially at this time need the tonic of our assured comradeship to keep up their stubborn struggle until greater military aid can be made available to them.

Perhaps even more important is the need to insure that China will still be on our side when the peace settlement is made. We cannot afford to risk a victory in China's internal politics of a reactionary and anti-democratic group; and such a group might rise to power if the bogey of the white man's insolence could be revived. Admiral H. E. Yarnell, for many years head of our naval forces in the Far East and intimately acquainted with Chinese public opinion, has strongly expressed himself on both points: "It is needless to enlarge upon the desperate situation in China today," he says, "and the grave possibility that the National Government may collapse unless effective aid is given at the earliest possible moment. . . .

"The most effective method is to consider, by act as well as word, China as an equal in every respect with the other three Allied Nations in the conduct of the war and in the postwar settlement. . . .

"In order to ensure peace in the Far

COMMON GROUND

East, there must be a strong, stable, and democratic government in China. We have every reason to expect that, if the National regime remains in power. . . .

"The friendship that has existed between the United States and China for many years must continue in the future if we hope to maintain peace in the world. It cannot continue if these laws [the exclusion laws] are retained on the statute books. Modern China is determined to take her rightful place in the congress of nations. It is our duty and it is to our interest to help her attain that end."

A point likely to be forgotten or to be underestimated in its importance is that anything which helps strengthen our friendship with the Chinese nation will increase our influence on the peace settlement in Asia, and, most of all, our influence on China's own social and economic reconstruction. China will need our help, and with our enormous production plant and potential manpower we shall need the Chinese market. The one hundred or so Chinese immigrants whom we might admit could not take jobs from millions of demobilized American soldiers, but an enlarged trade with China would give employment to many thousands of Americans. Such trade and friendly relations after the war—not to mention the speeding of victory in the Far East today—will be realized only if we recognize China as politically our equal, if we remove from our law and from our thinking the idea of its people's inferiority.

More important, the American people

itself is entering upon a new and perhaps difficult phase in its political development. We cannot afford much longer to be inconsistent in our laws and practices. We, too, are still in process of becoming one people, and we must hasten that process if we wish to face the world in peace time with the same inner strength our unanimity has given us in the present war. The repeal of Chinese exclusion—a small measure in itself—may well be one of those acts by which we now renounce the remnants of those group prejudices which have so long clogged our progress toward real unity. We shall, no doubt, always prefer our own American ways, shall always be happiest among people of our own cultural background. But we must learn not to insult other peoples and other ethnic groups. More than ever, in the days to come, our peace and our prosperity are predicated upon good relations with those nations that cherish similar ideals. The Chinese have sought our friendship. Let us, then, introduce a little realism into our immigration and naturalization laws, at least to the extent of removing—at no cost to ourselves and with great gain—one of the few remaining obstacles to our co-partnership with the great continental people of the East.

Bruno Lasker is the author of Filipino Immigration to the United States and of Asia on the Move: Population Pressure, Migration and Resettlement in Eastern Asia Under the Influence of Want and War (soon to be published).

CITIZEN KWONG

CARL GLICK

THE DAY before election Kwong called me on the telephone.

"Tomorrow is the time for all good Americans to vote early and come to the aid of their party," he said cheerfully. "So hurry to Chinatown and help me celebrate. It's a very special day—quite an event in the Kwong family. My eldest son had his twenty-first birthday a few months ago. Tomorrow he goes to the polls and casts his first vote. It is an exciting and delicate occasion. Come and assist me in seeing that he behaves properly and does not disgrace me. Then we shall have a banquet to celebrate the triumphs of democracy."

I have known Kwong for some years now. He is a successful merchant, pays his income tax without quibbling, is kind and gentle to his family, and considerate to his friends. In his daily life, so it seems to me, he practises most of the Christian virtues—and a few very special Chinese ones. He never even once complained of the sacrifices he made in helping his eldest son, James, complete his college education.

So, on election morning, after casting my vote, I went to Chinatown. Kwong and his son were waiting for me at the appointed place. They were dressed in their Sunday best. While outwardly they seemed self-possessed and calm, I knew by the sparkle in their eyes, they were making quite an effort to conceal their emotions and hide their excitement behind a bland smile. With them was seven-year-old Wei-Ming, Kwong's youngest son, holding on

firmly to his father's hand. On the lapels of his coat were the campaign buttons of all the political candidates in that year's race.

"He has been collecting them for the past two months," smiled Kwong, in explanation. "He says he wishes he could vote for them all. He doesn't think it polite to show any partiality."

Off we started for the polls.

"This is indeed an event," I said. "Father and son going together to cast their votes."

Their faces became sober.

"I am not voting," said Kwong, unhappily. A warning look from James made me hold my tongue.

At the polls James took his place in line, while Kwong and I, with little Wei-Ming hanging onto his father's fat leg, stood at one side. When it came his turn, James proudly spoke his name, signed the register with a flourish, and stepped into the booth.

"It won't take him long," said Kwong. "He's going to vote the straight ticket. He has his own reasons, too. Been going to rallies of both parties and listening to lots of speeches. Had I been able to vote, he would have had me convinced."

In a moment James stepped from the booth. He waved his hand in greeting to us.

"I wish it were proper to applaud!" said Kwong, beaming with pleasure. When James joined us, he shook his hand, and exclaimed, "Congratulations, Citizen James Kwong! I have been looking for-

ward to this hour ever since the day you were born here—twenty-one years ago. Now let us have a banquet to celebrate!”

We started up the street toward the restaurant. To those Chinese Kwong knew who were loitering on the sidewalk or in the doorway of their stores, he said in passing, “He voted!”

“Good!” they answered. “Good!”

Several of his friends joined us at the restaurant and we sat down not only to a banquet—but also to speeches. Kwong spoke in Chinese, but James translated for me.

“He’s politely thanking them for the honor they do him in being with us on this important day. He says it’s a great privilege to be able to vote in a democracy. Father is very happy today. He’s happy because I can do something he can’t.”

“Isn’t he a citizen?” I asked.

James shook his head. “No—he isn’t.”

“But he’s lived here all his life.”

“Yes, of course. But he was born in China. He was only a few months old when my grandparents brought him to this country. So he isn’t a citizen.”

“He could have become naturalized, couldn’t he?” I asked.

“You’re forgetting the Exclusion Laws,” James reminded me. “He can’t become naturalized. That’s the law.”

“But why doesn’t he protest?”

James looked shocked. “That wouldn’t be good manners,” he said. “It isn’t polite, really. If you were a guest in another man’s house, would you criticize him openly if he did not treat you kindly?”

Then he smiled. “But perhaps some day, this old, outmoded law, the Chinese Exclusion Act, will be repealed. Father will then be able to vote. And when that day comes, I shall give him a banquet to celebrate and—yes—make a speech, too.”

Three years have passed since that election day. And a great many things have

happened in the world. In the window of Kwong’s store hangs a service flag. James is now in the Army and has an A.P.O. address. It has been a long time since Kwong has seen him; but he is very proud of his eldest son, for he knows that somewhere, some place, James is fighting for his country. But still Kwong does not raise a voice in protest over his own inability to become a citizen. And I am certain should I ask him why he doesn’t, he would give the same answer as did James, “It wouldn’t be good manners—especially now.”

I asked one of my Chinese friends why it is they so rarely speak a word in their own defense.

His good-humored reply surprised me. “It is socially awkward and philosophically unsound,” he said. “Perhaps it was Confucius who got us off on the wrong foot—if it is the wrong foot—when he advised, ‘Don’t criticize other people’s faults, criticize your own. If a man would be severe toward himself and generous toward others, he would never arouse resentment.’ So, putting this principle into practice, isn’t it much better for a man to work hard to put his own house in order rather than complain when he is being treated unfairly?”

“Then too,” he continued, “a man who is always talking about himself and telling people of his virtues is a social bore. And if he talks too much, people will begin to doubt his veracity. It is much better to let someone else pay you a compliment than to boast yourself about your own accomplishments. Isn’t it better for a man to let his friends and neighbors see by his good behavior the sort of person he really is than for him to remind the world of his virtues?”

“I also feel,” he went on, “that the Chinese are too proud a people to complain. We are also a practical and realistic, if not a stoical, people. If you knew you wouldn’t receive sympathy, would you rub

CITIZEN KWONG

more salt into the wounds? It may take longer, but we would rather wait until our friends discover for themselves what we are really like. I think, too, we are a democratic people. We recognize the integrity of the Americans. If they decide we are worthy of being accepted as citizens, we shall be very pleased at the honor and compliment they pay us."

Others give me much the same answer. They are "guests" in this country, having come to America as did all other groups seeking freedom from oppression, and hoping to do their share in helping make democracy work. Even though the door has been slammed in their faces, they have not complained.

It is embarrassing to me. I don't know how to answer these young men and women of Chinese descent, to whom tomorrow the world belongs, and who want to have a share and play their part in helping shape that world. It is particularly embarrassing when I realize their good manners, superior behavior, and the contributions the Chinese have made to American life and culture, and I am not thinking now only of the part they played in building the railroads and the development of the West.

"Being sensibly tolerant, we do not want to remind our American friends or even our humble selves of this 'legal' discrimination," one Chinese youth said to me. "Trying hard to act as civilized people should, we want to overcome hatred with 'charity for all and malice towards none.' We have been hoping that, perhaps, through our kind understanding, America will some day realize the injustice of this Act and repeal it without too much fuss."

This same youth expects soon to be inducted into the Army. His brothers are

citizens. But like Kwong, he was born in China, and so is classed as an alien. He tried to enlist but was turned down.

He is somewhat confused about the whole matter. "It is unbelievable," he told me, "but do you realize that many American people do not even know there is a law barring us China-born residents from becoming citizens? Forgive me, please, but I was somewhat embarrassed when my draft board asked me why I never applied for citizenship. When I told them the reason, they were surprised. But then I learned that when I am inducted into the Army I'll be naturalized within ninety days in the 'take-it-and-like-it' manner. But I don't object, even if it does seem somewhat odd that I am given a chance to be naturalized only at the risk of my life. However, should I be so unfortunate as to be killed in battle, I still think I'd rather be a dead citizen than a live alien. Of course," he added, smiling, "I think as a live citizen I'd be of more real service!"

Perhaps, since the Chinese Americans won't speak a word in their own defense, it is up to the rest of us to discover for ourselves just what part they have played in our democracy, just what fine "live citizens" they would make.

Since good manners may prevent them from speaking in their own behalf, isn't it time we went out of our way to examine our own manners to try to determine how good they really are?

Carl Glick is the author of Shake Hands With the Dragon and the recently published Three Times I Bow (Whittlesey House), both volumes dealing with Chinese Americans.

PORTRAIT OF PAPA

FOTINE ZIRPIADES

THE OLD gentleman from Virginia, waiting to have his hat cleaned, started a conversation with Papa. "You're Greek, aren't you?"

"You English?" Papa reciprocated.

After a few commonplaces about their respective backgrounds, they began on the classics.

"One of the real pleasures of my college days was my study of Homer," said the old man. "I can still remember the opening lines of the Iliad. 'Sing thou, oh Goddess, of the dreadful wrath, which grief on grief brought to the men of Greece.' That's my own translation," he added modestly.

"I never reed Homer in old Grik. In old country we work hard on the land and after harvest we go to school. Them days Grik children in Asia Minor spend extra time studying Turkish. But I reed the classical writers in modern Grik. I reed lot about Socrates, too. Funny thing about that man. All time people talk about him. 'Poor fahlow,' they say, 'to have wife like Xanthippe.' But they forget to say, 'Poor Xanthippe,' sometimes. They have six children, but he never tek care of them. All time he talk on street and Xanthippe have to work hard to feed the family.

"I know story you don't hear all time. One day some Griks from Asia meet Xanthippe and they say to her, 'Lucky woman, to live with the great man, to hear him talk, to serve him.' Xanthippe look at them to see if they was serioos. Then she ask, 'Do you have mules in Asia?' 'Of course,' say the travelers. They very much

surprised. 'Well, that's what I got. I got Athenian mule in my house.'"

Papa took the customer's hat off the block and put it on a windmill-like affair where it whirled around for a few minutes. It was a slow summer afternoon and the only other sign of activity was at the shoemakers' noisy machines in the rear of the store. Near the counters at the back, Papa's two other workers were sprawled on comfortable chairs, their feet resting on little wooden stools generally used by customers. One was snoring softly, his mouth wide open. The other was reading Mutt and Jeff in a Greek American daily.

Homer's admirer looked about him at the large window display where an assortment of renovated hats, shoes, and movie posters was neatly arranged. Behind the long marble-topped counter at which Papa was working, was a row of glass-enclosed cases with more hats. And there was Papa's big safe with accounts, family statistics like birth certificates, passports, and naturalization papers, a bank book or two, and more recently war bonds on their way to a safe-deposit box.

The six old-fashioned leather chairs set high on marble platforms opposite the hat counter were empty at the moment; they looked like prisoners facing a firing squad. High on the opposite wall was a large aged sign: "We are not responsible for hats left over 30 days."

Papa stopped the machine and smiled. His large, brown eyes, his short brows, even his small, fat mustache seemed eager. As if he were at the Delphian oracle,

PORTRAIT OF PAPA

he asked, "What do you think about the War?"

He listened until his new friend began to compare the characters of the Germans and the British. Then he interrupted politely. "Excuse me, but you want to know why people like the England and don't like the Germans? If you know somebody who come to visit you and very soon he say, 'Git out—this is my house and everything in it is mine,' I don't think you like that man very much. That's Germany. But if you have an old friend who come for a week or so, you give him the best room in the house. And if he want to stay a little more, you say, 'Of course.' Then he stay some more and maybe pay some rent. One day he say to you politely, 'This parlor and bedroom is mine. You keep the other rooms and I don't bother you no more.' All time he is very polite, so you are polite too. And in the end he is using your kitchen and bathroom. But it's too late to do anything about it. That's England. Anyway the England keep your house pretty clean and once in a while she give you something too."

"I don't know that I agree with you entirely. There may be *something* to what you say, however. At any rate, it sounds good."

Papa beamed. He sent out for coffee.

"How did you get into this business?" the old man asked.

"Well, when I git here, I don't know nothing. My brother and friends were shining shoes, so I begin shining shoes. After 20 months I open a store in Albany. But in wintertime we have very few customers. Then one day someone say to me, 'There's money in the Virginia factories. Why do you stay here, when you can get rich in Hopewell?'

"I work two days in Hopewell and there was an Irish fahlow, a foreman. All the time he say, 'Tek it izy, boys, tek it izy.' It was dangeroos work. They make

dynamite. That night I take the train back to Albany. I don't git any pay. I just take the factory boots and a pair long rubber gloves to pay for my trouble.

"Some other time I tek another job digging in street. Some another foreman tell me, 'Tek it izy.' But this one mean, 'Don't work so hard. I mek more if you go slow.' One day he tell me to rest a little, like the other men. So I go in office and sleep on a couch for a couple hours. When I wake up, I don't have job. So I go back to shining shoes and I learn about cleaning hats and I git better store. It's hard work, but it's safe. I always mek a good living and there's no foreman to say all time, 'Tek it izy, boys, tek it izy.'"

The old man smiled. "But I thought



you Greeks were brave and not afraid of danger."

"Griks is brave, all right. But they gotta have a reason. It's good to be courageos when you have something to fight for. I'm not hero, so I don't look for trouble. No, I'm better off here."

COMMON GROUND

When as children we revealed extravagant tendencies, Papa reverted to a reliable old cliché—the undeniable fact we were lucky to have been born here. Whenever he speaks to us seriously, he speaks Greek and becomes rather pompous, for our language is that way.

“*Paithiá mou*,” he begins solemnly, “my children, if only you knew how fortunate you are. You were born here in this glorious land in which your every desire is fulfilled, in which you have nothing to fear. You are getting an education which is reserved for the wealthy in many parts of Europe. We eat like kings, we have theaters and taxis and boats for summer picnics, you have long vacations during almost every season. You have even seen a part of Europe. I had never seen America at your age.

“When I came here, I did not know the language or the customs. I knew nothing except farming. But since none of my friends had left the large cities and I had to do something, I did what other Greeks were doing. For fifteen dollars a month, a few tips, and my board, I shined shoes for thirteen hours a day, sometimes fourteen. And though I was not the happiest man on earth, I was content and I had hope.”

Papa and six or seven other “boys” of various ages lived in two rooms above the store, eating food that would not have borne close scrutiny. The boys’ employer was not losing money. Once that year Papa spent fifteen cents on fruit, one of his few self-indulgences. That was in 1913. In 1914 he had over \$100 in the bank and had sent money home.

With tales like this Papa tried to embarrass us into withdrawing all requests that he deemed unreasonable. At twelve I asked for my first weekly allowance. Eventually, with my backing and advice, my sisters followed suit. Later there were demands for special increases.

“Papa, we need more money. Christmas is coming and there are lots of gifts we have to buy.”

“But I don’t want any presents.”

“You may not, but Mama does. We’re using her money for your gift, anyway.”

“And where did Mama get her money?”

As we were promoted in school, we needed new things in rapid succession: a costume for a play, a better schoolbag, a fountain pen, a typewriter. We got scooters, bicycles, a piano. Always we got what we asked for, though sometimes only after a struggle. We had our favorite themes too!

“Times have changed, you know. And, as you yourself say, this is America. After all, Papa, I’m in Junior High now and \$1.50 a week can’t be too much.”

When Papa first came to the United States, unlike most Greeks, he learned a lot of English in a relatively short time. “For fifteen months I listened to educated Americans and studied every night.”

But although his vocabulary was constantly increasing, his grammar and diction never went beyond a certain point. Secure in the not unjustified belief that most of his friends could do no better, and constantly surrounded by foreign tongues and exotic accents, he never felt the need of attending school. And so it is that though he understands the language of the New York Times better than the idiom of the tabloids, he constantly says *woLk* for walk, *toLk* for talk, *git* for get, good appetite, *ol kay*, and them books; and he has never become intimate with the past tense. Sometimes listening to him is almost painful, especially since we are accustomed to his excellent Greek.

We have tried reasoning and persuasion, sarcasm and even mimicry, but our attempts prove futile. He can always think of someone who mistreats the language worse than he. He launches into the story

PORTRAIT OF PAPA

of a Neapolitan acquaintance describing his trip to Italy. The man had expected to be impressed with the improvements brought about by fascism. But the one thing that clung tenaciously in his memory was the subject of castor oil. When Papa asked him whether the Italians liked Mussolini, he gave an answer that became a classic in our home long before the war:

"Ma you like, ma you no like, ma you gara like. You no lika the big boss, you gera the castorolio in the biga mouth. My brother, he toka, toka olla time and one day two big fascisti come and they teka him and giva him the castorolio. Three, four day, olla time, glug, glug, glug. Efta that he no toka so much."

Papa's own peculiar pronunciation disappears and we hear the explosive Mr. Rosselli. Mama giggles and shakes and we almost slap each other on the back in appreciation. Papa is smart and he knows it, and perhaps it is this that makes him a little smug. Mama believes he is the epitome of perfection. "If only I spoke half as well as your father!" she says.

Papa tells other stories—of the Greek who started his career in the new world by selling fruits and vegetables from a pushcart. For weeks he rarely sold an orange. This puzzled him greatly. He asked a friend, an old-timer, to stay with him a day and solve the mystery. Eventually a customer walked up and began looking at the oranges. After putting a few aside, she asked, "Sweet?"

"No," came the proud answer, "Grik!"

The woman hurried away. The fruit vendor turned to his friend and shrugged. "You see? They're crazy. First they ask me if I'm a Swede and when I tell them my nationality, they walk away."

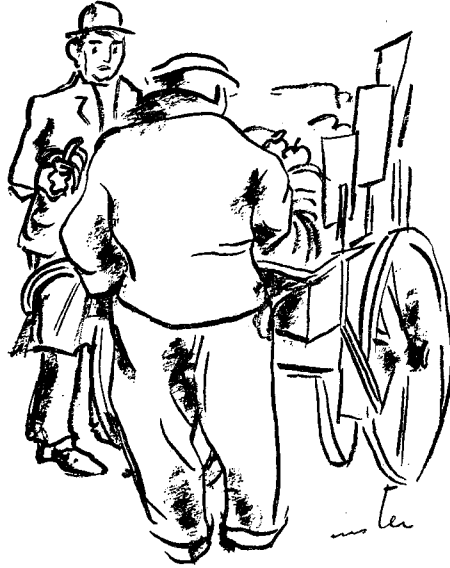
The friend explained, and the oranges began to sell.

Another man from Papa's home town had acquired the habit of putting a nickel in the subway turnstile every time he

made an exit. Once, as Papa and he were going up the subway stairs, he whispered surreptitiously, "Peter, I did it. I played a trick!"

Papa had not noticed anything unusual. He asked what he meant.

"I came out without putting any money



in the slot! I just pushed the thing and it moved, and nobody noticed me."

"Imagine," he remarked happily to Papa later. "If you hadn't told me, I would probably never have known."

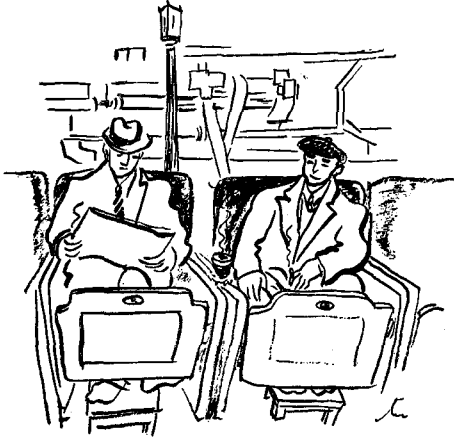
This particular narrative has always been difficult for us to swallow. It sounds plausible as Papa is telling it, but he is a little too emphatic when he reminds us that his friend was very slow in school.

Papa recalls his first sight of bananas in downtown New York. In his tight pants and creaking shoes, he strolled past the fruit stand time and again, wondering what the yellow things could be. "They must be edible, but are they cooked or eaten whole?"

Finally a young woman bought some for her little boy. He peeled the fruit

COMMON GROUND

casually, as he walked along, and threw the skin on the sidewalk. Now Papa knew. Curiously he bought three bananas and cautiously bit into one. The joy of that first taste! In some strange way it reminded him of the delicacies his mother had once made, of the olives and cheese he used to eat in the fields, and yet it brought strange



countries into his mind, lands where this beautiful fruit was grown.

Papa doesn't always talk about his early days here. Sometimes, eyes opening wide, voice increasing gradually in volume, and body illustrating his story, he tells us about the old country. And there are hot summer nights, when we lie in our beds with all the doors open to catch a delinquent breeze and Papa talks about the store.

The store means a lot to him. He has found a good deal of his social life there. Some of his customers have been bringing him their business since he bought it twenty-four years ago. There are Czechs who moved to Astoria years ago, who still come to town for new lifts or just to chat. And they have taught him a little of their language.

There is the German Friedrich, whom Papa and Mama and Mr. Antoni, our shoemaker, call Mr. Fritherico. Mr. Fri-

therico is somewhat cross-eyed and erudite. A bachelor, perhaps not by inclination, he speaks with a strong British accent which becomes barely understandable when a female enters the store. Papa and he have had many long discourses on philosophy, theology, and the classics. Occasionally, after a particularly stimulating session, Papa sends for coffee from the Greek restaurant and cake from the Hungarian bakery, and he, Mr. Toni, Fritherico, and Francisco, Papa's Italian employee, relax in the back room.

Next to the store is a Czech tailor—Paul Svoboda. Once Paul suggested he and Papa become partners, but Papa felt their friendship would be firmer if they remained only neighbors. Naturally Saints Peter and Paul, as we call them, still chat outside their doors on summer evenings and go to each other for change. And no amount of money could improve the work Mr. Svoboda does on our suits and dresses, while his family's hats and shoes reflect the best work of Papa and Mr. Antoni.

Drunks have always been among the most interesting of his customers. They generally come in to sell a hat. Papa never refuses a good offer.

"Listen, mister, buy my hat. I gotta have a drink."

"I don't need any hats."

"I paid five bucks for this when it was new."

"Well, it's not new now."

"It's worth three. But give me one and it's a deal."

"I'll give you a quarter."

"I can get more than that where I bought it."

"Tek it there and git outa here."

"Okay, I'll take the quarter."

And Papa cleans and blocks the shapeless mess into a thing of beauty, which he sells for \$1.50. If it's a particularly good hat, he may wear it himself.

PORTRAIT OF PAPA

"Why should I feel guilty?" he says when we question him. "Somebody else would steal the hat or he would lose it."

"But why don't you give them more money, Pa?"

"If I give them more, they git more drunk and that's not good. This ways he gits one drink, I mek a little profit, and we're both happy."

Petty racketeers once tried to sell him protection. But he picked up a hat block and with a few choice words invited them to meet him outside. "I protect myself," he shouted. And his Zeus-like, square-jawed head and solid body confirmed this. For a time he submitted to the protection policemen used to offer in return for occasional "gifts." But one day, when an enterprising officer of the old school objected to the size of his Christmas present, Papa decided not to play Santa Claus any longer. So he lost a friend—as well as many opportunities to buy tickets to police functions. Business continued as usual.

The store is one of the family. At breakfast each New Year's Day, when Papa cuts the *pita* all Greek women make for the holiday, after blessing a piece for each of us and our home, he cuts a slice "for the Store." And when we complain sometimes of the inordinate amount of time and effort he has put into it, Papa reminds us that without "that dump" we could not have gone to college or had many of the other good things life has given us. But now that we children are grown up and are making "good money,"

we have been trying to get him to retire. He is 52 and strong, but we feel he deserves a real vacation more than the average man.

"Please, Papa," we urge in Greek (second person plural so that we'll be more effective), "close the store or sell it or get someone to manage it. We can afford it. You could go to California and see Jimmy or have a second honeymoon in Florida. Then, if you got bored, you could open another store or get some kind of job. Do you want to die at work like Mr. Fotopoulos? What sort of life is this—work, sleep, go to Central Park on Sundays, see a movie now and then, visit Nyack occasionally? When you die, you'll see us throwing your money away and you'll be sorry."

He smiles and nods and says, "You're right. But. . ."

And deep down we are glad of that "but." Papa without the store and his apron on weekdays and the slight smell of benzine at night, without the hurry in the morning to get to the store first and the coming home at night laden with ice cream or pie or fruit and the newspapers for "the children"—that would simply not be Papa.

Fotine Zirpiades was graduated from Hunter College in 1942 and is now working for the Social Security Board. This is her first appearance in a national magazine.

The illustrator is Bernadine Custer.

IS THIS AMERICA SPEAKING?

CONGRESS, PRESS, AND PLATFORM

FLASHY dressed Negroes have been arrested in Hempstead. While these boys apparently are not charged with rape, if permitted to pursue their career of crime it is only a question of time until this outrage is committed. . . . It is customary in the North to think of lynch law in the South as a horrible thing, but it has had the one extenuating benefit of making the South the safest place in the world for white women and girls, even in areas where there is a preponderance of men of another race. Within the law there must be built up as quickly as possible the same protections for women and girls everywhere. . . ."

"Preferably we shall lock them [Negroes] up, but if it is necessary to string them up in order to make our homes secure, there will be no priorities on rope! . . ."

Editorials in the Review-Star, Rockville Center, Long Island, Spring and Summer 1943.

BLOOD ON HER HANDS

"It is blood on your hands, Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt.

"More than any other person, you are morally responsible for those race riots in Detroit where two dozen were killed and fully 500 injured in nearly a solid day of street fighting.

"You have been personally proclaiming and practicing social equality at the White House and wherever you go, Mrs. Roosevelt.

"In Detroit, a city noted for the growing impudence and insolence of the Negro

population, an attempt was made to put your preachments into practice. . . .

"Blood on your hands, Mrs. Roosevelt, and the damned spots won't wash out, either."

Editorial from the Jackson, Mississippi, Daily News, inserted in the Congressional Record for June 28, 1943, by Representative Frank W. Boykin, of Alabama.

"Some of our masters talk great nonsense these days about the un-Americanism of racial and religious prejudices and intolerance as though these were imported evils, possibly smuggled ashore from a German submarine in the dark of the moon. For example, an arbitrator in a New York labor dispute denounced all such with the remark that it is un-American, unfair and indecent to deprive a man of his job because of his color.

"It is unfair and indecent, but it is not un-American. On the contrary, racial and religious prejudice are common and characteristic among us. . . .

"We deceive ourselves if we believe that bigotry and intolerance are un-American. Prejudice flows in the blood of humankind and we have never been free of it nor ever will be."

Westbrook Pegler, "Fair Enough," June 30, 1943.

"True to the traditions of our beloved southland, I am for white supremacy and race purity, first, last, and always. I will not tolerate as governor any crackpot theories seeking to bring about political or social equality between the white and

black races. . . . I lay it down as a flat proposition that while I am governor of Mississippi, regardless of what Congress does with the poll tax, Mississippi Negroes are not going to belly up to the polls and take charge of elections in this state. . . .”

Opening campaign speech of Lester J. Franklin, candidate for governor, Mississippi, Summer, 1943.

“A few days ago Lt. Gen. John L. De Witt, who as commanding general of the western defense command conducted the evacuation and relocation [of Americans of Japanese birth or descent], was quoted as declaring:

“‘A Jap’s a Jap. It makes no difference whether he is an American citizen or not. . . .’

“Mr. President, I applaud those words and endorse them. I believe them. I believe that the history of the Japanese race has proven to the absolute satisfaction of every American citizen—and when I say ‘American citizen’ in my own mind I exclude the Japanese—that the Japanese are utterly dishonest, that they are constitutionally deceptive. I do not believe there stands today upon the free soil—if I may call it so—of the United States of America one single solitary person with Japanese blood in his veins who will not stab you in the back. Show me a Jap and I will show you a person who is the embodiment of treachery and deception. . . .”

Speech of the Hon. Tom Stewart of Tennessee in the Senate, April 22, 1943.

“Mr. Speaker, the gentleman from New York [Mr. Celler] said a moment ago that they ought to seize the farmers’ meat and cattle in order to feed the people in New York. Now, if he will send that gang of communistic Jews and Negroes that came down here day before yesterday and tried to storm the House restaurant, and went around here arm in arm with each other in

this Capitol, if he will just send them down into Texas, or out into the West, or anywhere else in the cattle-growing belt, to do the seizing of those cattle, they will not have so many people to feed in New York. . . .

“When those communistic Jews—of whom the decent Jews are ashamed—go around here and hug and kiss these Negroes, dance with them, intermarry with them, and try to force their way into white restaurants, white hotels and white picture shows, they are not deceiving any red-blooded American, and, above all, they are not deceiving the men in our armed forces—as to who is at the bottom of all this race trouble. . . .

“They have caused the deaths of many good Negroes who never would have got into trouble if they had been left alone, as well as the deaths of many good white people, including many innocent, unprotected white girls, who have been raped and murdered by vicious Negroes, who have been encouraged by these alien-minded Communists to commit such crimes. . . .”

Speech of the Hon. John E. Rankin of Mississippi in the House, July 1, 1943.

“I say to you that any man coming from the South knows that a southerner does not refer to a colored man as ‘mister.’ When I started talking about this man and getting information on him [Dr. William Pickens, principal securities promotion specialist for the Treasury Department, Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Yale, and formerly on the staff of the NAACP], I did not even know he was a colored man. I got in the habit of saying ‘Mr. Pickens’ and made that statement on the floor two or three times, which is evidence to you that I did not even know he was a colored man. . . .”

Speech by the Hon. Joe Hendricks of Florida in the House, February 8, 1943.

PULLING THE TURNIP

LETA BROWNE

IT WAS the second day on my new job—that of teaching English to the foreign-born. Just before the afternoon session, the Director of Americanization called me to her office.

“How did you get along yesterday?” she asked brightly.

“All right,” I lied, “but it is such a conglomerate class—”

“What do you mean?” I felt her bristling.

“Well, there are no two of them, out of the thirty, who have similar education, understanding, or intelligence. If I teach one, all the others wait until I get to their respective levels.”

She frowned. “You surely didn’t expect your former high school set-up to be duplicated in this work! Of course these people aren’t graded and standardized. Some can’t speak English at all, and some can’t read in any language. Others are innately intelligent and understand nearly everything you say. But most all of them are from the peasant class and have common traits you should utilize in teaching them. For instance, they all love a play.” She turned quickly and went into the closet, emerging eventually with a sheaf of papers.

“Here are some folk tales,” she said, holding them up before me. “The foreign-born respond to anything dramatic. If you would act out these stories—” she looked at me a moment dubiously—“and repeat the verb each time you illustrate it, you’d get immediate interest and results.”

I shuddered, but she gained momentum.

“Now this story, for instance, never fails.”

She showed me the illustrations. I saw a man trying to pull a large turnip from the ground. The leaves and the top fourth of the vegetable were exposed to view, leaving no possible mistake as to its identity. A woman was holding fast to the man’s waist and standing close behind him, likewise pulling. A boy was behind her, holding onto her waist, and straining and frowning. Then followed a girl, then a dog and a cat, all intent on raising that single turnip. Their common objective, and its futility, were clearly apparent.

But on the next page came the climax. The first picture was duplicated, except for a tiny mouse pulling on the cat’s tail. Also—the turnip was by now three-fourths out of the ground.

“Now this is the way,” said my boss earnestly, “to show the story and to increase your pupils’ English vocabulary.”

She got into a bent pulling position. Both arms were stretched toward the floor. She had hold of the turnip top.

“Don’t forget to repeat the English word each time you act it,” she cautioned. “Now watch me.”

She bent almost to the floor and pulled at the air.

“I pull the turnip,” she said with each straining motion. “I pull the turnip.”

She was having a grand time.

“After that,” she continued, as she stood straight again, “you must indicate

PULLING THE TURNIP

that a woman is helping you. Turn around—" she turned her head—"and say woman—woman pull also." Then show them pictures of each animal, saying the name of it as you point to each one. This lesson never misses. It's all up to you."

She handed me the story and rubbed her back. "A person has to use ingenuity in this work," she explained. "It's different from other kinds of teaching." I silently agreed. "Now go to your classroom and try it out. You'll have big classes both this afternoon and evening. The women finish their washing on Monday so flock to school on Tuesday afternoons. And the men often have union meetings on Monday night, but are free the following night. So you may expect good big classes."

She was right. Every seat was filled. Really filled. In very few cases was there space between waistline and desk.

I saw two bunches of freshly picked flowers on my desk. Thanking the women who had brought them, I hurried back to the office for vases. But the flowers were finally in water. There seemed nothing to do but begin.

I stood before the patient, worn faces and tried to smile.

"I have a story for you today," I began.

They looked blank. How could I explain "story"? I started again.

"This is a turnip." I showed a picture of that vegetable. I put my finger on the middle of the fat part. "Turnip," I repeated.

"Rapa," said one wrinkled old lady.

I shook my head. "No, turnip. In English, turnip."

They shook their heads. It was something else to them; I could do nothing about it.

So I went into action. Bending almost to the floor, I strained. Drawing back, I said, "I pull the turnip—I pull."

All eyes were big.

I pointed to the floor. "I pull the turnip from the ground."

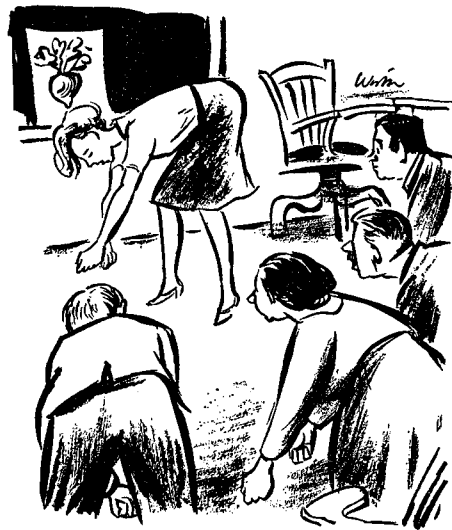
They followed my pointed finger. Now there was open disbelief. They simply knew better.

"Ground," I said frantically, "not floor—ground. Terra."

They became more cheerful. Some explained to others. Maybe the teach was acting. I felt an air of suspended sentence.

I pulled and strained at the air a few inches above the floor. Each time I pulled, I said the word. They were fascinated. They began to move their bodies in unison with mine.

Mrs. Ferrini, who knew some English, nodded understandingly. "Rapa, he tough.



Grow way down. Me know, in old country."

I threw her a grateful smile.

"Tough to pull," I said with appropriate action.

"So," I continued, slowly standing up straight, "I get help."

How to illustrate "help"? I gave up on that one.

"A woman will help me," I said. "A woman—" I pointed to several of them

COMMON GROUND

in turn, then to myself. They looked startled.

I showed them the first picture, the one without the mouse. It wasn't very large, so I went around the room with it, pointing to the woman and saying the word. That took some time. I gathered strength.

The class was chuckling. So no one could pull up the turnip! They explained it at length to each other in their various languages.

I bent once more. "Now we both pull," I explained with a swaying motion. "But," I paused in my labor, "turnip no come up."

Did I say that, I wondered.

Mrs. Ferrini again interrupted. "Rapa, he tough. Grow way down."

"Si," I answered, standing straight again. "So I get help." I pointed to pictures of the children. "Boy and girl help me."

Again I bent. "We pull, and pull, and pull. But no good."

The women were now definitely sympathetic. Their teach might be crazy, but at least she was working hard and obviously needed help. "No good," said some of them sorrowfully.

I stood up and pointed to the pictures of the dog and cat. "They help me. Dog and cat, they help me," I said.

Mrs. Ferrini was scornful. "Dog and cat no work together. Dog and cat they fight."

I smiled wanly.

I pulled once again, saying the verb clearly and definitely.

Mrs. Carone spoke in Italian. "No good for teacher. She isn't strong enough. She better get a man." The others agreed.

"No," I said desperately. "I get a mouse."

They frowned in unison. What did I mean?

I took the second picture around the room, pointing to the mouse holding onto the cat's tail, and repeated the word mouse. The women peered at this picture in evident dissatisfaction. Something was wrong.

Again I went into action. First I stretched one arm behind me, designating successive spaces of air for each one of my helpers. Then I girded myself for the final effort.

"Now," I explained, "we pull again. The mouse helps a little. His help is enough to pull the turnip. See!"

I made a quick upward motion. Regaining my balance, I stood up and faced the class, holding the invisible vegetable toward them.

"The turnip is pulled up!" I said, changing voice in my excitement.

The class looked at my empty hands, then at me. There was an instant of dead silence. Then they burst into applause.

"Brava!" they exclaimed. "Brava!"

I went weakly to my chair and dropped into it.

Mrs. Ferrini spoke. "Povera teach," she said. "Work too hard. You good teach. Only—"

"Yes?"

"Story," she replied, "he no good. We all say story no good."

"But why?"

"Mouse, he never take hold cat's tail. Scared of cat."

I nodded in complete agreement.

Leta Browne, author of two previous Americanization sketches in our pages, was recently inducted into the WACs.

Kurt Werth is the illustrator.

PASSOVER AND AMERICANS IN THE PACIFIC

HENRY A. DAVIDSON

THERE is perhaps something ironical in observing Passover in these times; for here is a feast which marks deliverance of the Jews from bondage; and is there not something grim in observing this at a time when millions of our people are in a bondage more oppressive than that inflicted by the Pharaohs? Yet if this war should free the Jews from their role as bigotry's number 1 victim, then in future generations a new Passover will be celebrated to mark the end of the conflict of today.

We who hold this ceremony are, let it be remembered, Americans. Where would we be if our parents had not found asylum in America? Scraping the harsh soil of an eastern European farm? Sweating in a packed central European freight car, en route to a new slavery? Crawling in the mud of a German concentration camp? or in Warsaw, hanging on a lamppost? To us who have been spared these horrors because we have been welcomed in America, the kiddish at every meal must be a toast to America.

Our people fled from the steaming ghettos and sterile farms of Europe and came to a land which gave them the dignity of full citizenship, the right to earn a living, rear their children, seek an education. Sometimes we whine about our difficulties; we complain that colleges have a quota on Jews, or business firms discriminate against employing us. But all who can afford the tuition somehow get their higher education. We have all somehow made our living. We do not fear the tramp of street police, nor the desecration

of our temples or synagogues in America today.

But what if we should lose America? What if a militant fascist minority, an evil foreign-sponsored force, a mob of war-disillusioned agitators, should institute in America some western brand of Nazism? Where do we go from there? For we are of the tribes that have wandered over the face of the earth. Each time, we have packed our remaining belongings, gathered the children who have survived the pogroms, and taken the trek to the next stop. And on this flight to the west, we have eventually come to America. Where do we go from there? The answer is "Nowhere." For America is the end of the line—the jumping-off point. Lose that and we lose all.

Surely it is better that you and I die here in the Pacific while America wins the war and keeps there a haven for our people, than for us to survive American defeat. What would happen to us if America were defeated—or if a negotiated peace opened the doors to fascism—what would happen to us, I leave to your imagination. We Jews necessarily have a 100 per cent investment in American victory. Many residents of America will do their business at the same old stand whether it is the swastika or the Star Spangled Banner that flies on Capitol Hill. But you and I couldn't. Even as the Founders of the Republic, we too have pledged as a stake in allied victory, our lives, our liberties, and our sacred honor.

We will win the war. But after the war,

COMMON GROUND

many families will have black-draped portraits and empty chairs at the dinner table, and hearts embittered by loss in battle of their loved ones. In their grief, many such families will show no interest in the political implications of victory. They will feel only their personal loss and will hate the war. And returned soldiers may find themselves speared on the turbulent ups and downs of a postwar economic cycle. They will feel cheated. And as victory will bring no millennium, the idealists will feel disillusion and frustration. A wave of disillusion, indeed, may sweep the nation. This view will be erroneous, but it is the way people will feel, the way they do feel, after all wars. And in a brutalized world, an embittered, disillusioned, and restless people can be an ominous force.

Then may surge the mass hysteria of blame and recrimination. Someone may say that the Jews started the war, that this global conflict was only a grudge fight started by Jews to punish Hitler. In one breath, the Jews may be decried as Communists and capitalists; Communists who sought the war to support Russia; capitalists who sought the war to make profits out of it. The cold facts of the origin of the war will be futile against the hysterical mob looking for a scapegoat. And when a scapegoat is needed, the Jews are always available.

What can we do, what can other men of goodwill do, to frustrate the anti-Semitism that victory may bring? Are we to be condemned forever to be the whipping boys of history? When the forces of bigotry are choosing a victim, will we always be their Chosen People?

Perhaps some of you know the answer? I have no logical reply, no well-reasoned formula for stopping a potential wave of postwar anti-Semitism. All I have is a strong, perhaps unreasonable, faith. A faith in America. A faith that the land which gave us all the opportunities will

not now let us down. A faith in that verse engraved on the pedestal of the Statue of Liberty, with its last lines "Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed, to me: I lift my lamp beside the golden door." The poet, incidentally, was a Russian Jewish immigrant who wrote the verse out of a heart overflowing with gratitude for America's hospitality to the oppressed of the world.

America the Beautiful, says one of the songs in our Army Prayer Book. And with all its smoke-belching cities and billboard-littered highways it is, to the eyes of the wandering Jew, indeed, America the Beautiful! There she stands, thousands of miles away from us, anchorage of our hopes, symbol of everything that makes life worth living for you and me; last rampart of our people. We must fashion ourselves so that we do not lose it. On the long journeys of the tribes of Israel, America is surely Journey's End. Let it not be said that this, our last chance, was lost through any fault of our own.

With the heart of Europe torn out by the war, the center of gravity of Jewry, its spiritual and cultural focus, in coming generations, must be America. That imposes on us a grave responsibility, but in return, we may find that the wanderings are over and that, in time, we may thus escape the burden of being the universal scapegoat.

All this, America can give us. And to us then, it is a prayer, not a popular song, when we say "God Bless America."

This was a speech, delivered to a group of American soldiers of Jewish faith and origin somewhere in the Pacific, by Captain Henry A. Davidson of the United States Army. Captain Davidson will be remembered by early COMMON GROUND readers for his able discussion of "The Anatomy of Prejudice" in the Winter 1941 issue.

THE FOURTH—SOMEWHERE IN THE PACIFIC

ARTHUR D. WILLIAMS

ON A July night in 1776, John Adams took up his quill pen and wrote in a letter to his wife: "Yesterday the greatest question was decided which ever was debated in America. . . . It ought to be commemorated as the day of deliverance by solemn act of devotion to God Almighty. It ought to be solemnized with pomp and parade, with shows, games, sports, guns, bells, bonfires, and illuminations, from one end of this continent to the other, from this time forward forever more!"

Our country is great because it is good, and it is good because it is the greatest land of freedom this side of heaven. The men who wrote the Declaration of Independence were inspired by high and noble ideals. It is fitting that we here—far from America—should celebrate this day in a glorious way. This day reminds us that our efforts are for the noblest form of government. Our country has not got us in a bad spot. Rather, our country is giving us an opportunity to defend the deep desires of all mankind. We are here because we love our parents; we are here because we love our wives and children; we are here because we love America and God, in whom we trust.

Our country stands for freedom—not only the Four Freedoms, but for all freedom which is included in the Golden Rule, all freedom which is included in the Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights, yes, all freedom which is included in the Sermon on the Mount.

Only in our country would I be allowed to appear in this place on such a program.

Of my fellow-racemen, let me ask these questions. Where else but in our country could you have a George Washington Carver—born a slave, sold for a mule, and died the world's greatest industrial scientist?

Where but in our country could you have a Sergeant Joe Louis—born on an Alabama plantation, world's heavy-weight champion and donor of more money to the sailors' and soldiers' relief than any man in the armed services? Where but in America could we have a Marian Anderson—angelic singer and world-famous concert artist? Where else but in America have we a man—Jesse Owen—the fastest human in the world and the only American to throw dust in Hitler's eyes—at the Berlin Olympics? Where else but in America do we have a Lena Horne—scintillating star of Hollywood, one of the prettiest, sweetest, and most embraceable girls in the world? (Or so I am told.) Why, in America we have the only living man who claims he is God! Where but in America can we find a Father Divine?

Now a word to our white comrades—and these men have been to us comrades indeed. The piano has both white and black keys. There are more white keys than black, but you can not play the *Star Spangled Banner* without using both white and black. You can not play "hi-de-ho" or the *Jersey Bounce* without using white and black.

Our country can use all of its citizens. In our armed forces we have men in

COMMON GROUND

whose veins flows the blood of Japan, Russia, Germany, Italy, China, Africa, England, Ireland, and of many other nations. And America is dedicated to the task that all its citizens shall be treated alike. America does not intend that some shall live under the stripes and others under the stars. We shall all live under the stars and stripes forever.

Our mothers gave us physical birth, but America gives us the freedom and right to spiritual birth.

This is part of the main address at an Independence Day service somewhere in the Pacific. It comes to us from Lieutenant Commander Enoch Jones, Chaplain in

the U.S. Naval Reserve, who writes: "The speaker of the occasion, Arthur D. Williams, is an American Negro of the Army, the first Chaplain to land here, which was some time ago. . . ."

"My being a subscriber to COMMON GROUND prompted me to get the assistance of another Chaplain, William Robbins of the Army, to help me organize a Chaplains' Association which would include all the Chaplains on the island, and which would arrange programs of interest to the whole community—Americans of the Army, Navy, and Marine Corps, of all racial and national backgrounds. By organizing these events, we hope to succeed in making all Americans realize how dependent we are, one upon the other."

• Motion Pictures of the Quarter •

CONDUCTED BY EZRA GOODMAN

JUST about the best picture of recent months is *The Ox-Bow Incident*, based on the novel by Walter Van Tilburg Clark. *The Ox-Bow Incident* is a Western, but not of the Gene Autry-Hopalong Cassidy variety. There are no guitars, stagecoaches, or last-minute rescues in it. The picture is the lean, hard-bitten story of a lynching in a small Western town at the turn of the century, told without comic relief and with a vast respect for its subject matter. As a result, the film becomes a true and representative study of mob violence in any time or place. Credit for this must go to Lamar Trotti who both wrote and produced the film, to director William Wellman, a specialist in hard-hitting material, and to Henry Fonda, Dana Andrews, Frank Conroy, and the rest of a capable cast. *The Ox-Bow Incident* is one of the few authentic pieces of Americana that Hollywood has yet produced. It is not a pleasant picture, and

undoubtedly many moviegoers will criticize it as morbid. But to those picture patrons who are overdosed on a diet of pap and inanity, *The Ox-Bow Incident* will certainly seem less morbid than many of the more saccharine exhibits of the season.

Stage Door Canteen, made on a co-operative basis by Sol Lesser, with many stars of stage and screen donating their talents for charity purposes, is a series of vaudeville acts, punctuated by a violin recital by Yehudi Menuhin, a Shakespearian offering by Katharine Cornell, and similar diversions held together by a slim story about a soldier boy and a girl who meet at New York's Stage Door Canteen. One of the constructive phases of this film is its depiction, on a wholly democratic plane and without any condescension on the part of the white participants in the cast, of Chinese and colored boys in uniform. Unfortunately, the same can not

MOTION PICTURES OF THE QUARTER

be said of *Cabin in the Sky*, the all-Negro musical with Lena Horne, Rochester, and Ethel Waters, which M-G-M has produced. The very idea of an "all-Negro musical" implies a Jim-Crow attitude, and the Negroes in the picture, furthermore, are shown as crap-shooting, jazz-jiving irresponsibles or prayer-spouting revivalists. *Cabin in the Sky* is neither a good show or good sense. Twentieth Century-Fox's *Stormy Weather* offers little improvement.

Two recent war films suffer from similar faults. Both *Bataan* and *So Proudly We Hail* are trite tales with the American flag as a wrapper. The first purports to show men under duress in battle and succeeds only in exhibiting a series of paper-thin stencils against a painted backdrop. The second, which has to do with the valor of the nurses on Corregidor, is similarly sophomoric. Both films do an injustice to their titles.

Walt Disney's *Victory Through Air Power* is an hour-length lecture in animated cartoon form, based on Major Alexander P. de Seversky's best-selling volume. The Disney studio has devoted more than ninety per cent of its resources for the past year to training films for the armed forces and other governmental agencies and, as a result, has become adept in the technique of vividly animating a thesis or mechanical process on the screen. The merit or demerit of Seversky's book was the subject of much controversy at the time it was published, and the picture will probably arouse similar controversy. But *Victory Through Air Power* is a provocative film from the technical standpoint, for it stands as an indication of the vast educational potentialities of the screen, both for classroom and public use.

Although *Air Force* has been in circulation for some time, a comment on its attitude toward loyal Japanese Americans in Hawaii is still pertinent. As one of the

biggest productions of the year, *Air Force* has been and is being seen by millions of moviegoers who accept everything in it as documentary gospel. One thing that is far from documentary is the film's charge that the local Hawaiians of Japanese descent were "fifth columnists," blocking highways at Hickam Field, committing sabotage, and otherwise aiding the Japanese attack of December 7, 1941.

Investigations by the War and Navy Department, the FBI, and the Honolulu police have definitely proven that there were no acts of sabotage by residents of Japanese ancestry on or before December 7 or after that time. The Tolan Committee's Fourth Interim Report to Congress contains affidavits to that effect; Blake Clark in his book *Remember Pearl Harbor* confirms this, as did Speaker Roy Vitousek of the Territorial House during a recent visit to the mainland. Robert Casey, the well-known war correspondent of the *Chicago Daily News*, investigated the rumor that trucks driven by resident Japanese sabotaged Hickam Field, and found it false.

On the contrary, the record of the Hawaiians of Japanese ancestry has been one of the best in its contribution to territorial defense. 5,000 young men of Japanese descent from Hawaii are fighting in the U.S. Army. 10,000 Japanese Americans in Hawaii—or 40 per cent of all males of Japanese ancestry between 18 and 38—volunteered for combat duty in the U.S. Army following Pearl Harbor. This was the highest percentage of any group in the entire United States.

By accusing Japanese Americans in Hawaii of "treachery," *Air Force* perpetrates a terrible fiction. It is still not too late for Warner Brothers, the producers of the picture, to make public amends for their error by eliminating such scenes from *Air Force* and making a public statement which presents the true facts of the case.

• Miscellany •

BIRTHDAY: With this issue **COMMON GROUND** begins its fourth year—with an encouraging and increasing subscription list; with the good knowledge that the influence of the magazine is reaching out across the continent and beyond; with the admission that it is still feeling its way in the relatively unexplored field of intercultural and interracial relations, that it has a point of view but does not pretend to know all the answers; with the conviction that its readers are among the soundest people in the country—those who have caught the vision of what the “American idea” at its best might be; and with a reiteration of what it said editorially in its first number in the Autumn of 1940: “Never has it been more important that we become intelligently aware of the ground Americans of various strains have in common; that we sink our tap roots deep into America’s rich and varied cultural past and attain rational stability in place of emotional hysteria; that we reawaken the old American Dream with its powerful emphasis on the fundamental worth and dignity of every human being.”

“THERE ARE THINGS TO DO,” by Lillian Smith, editor of *South Today*, has been reprinted from the Winter issue of that magazine and copies are available at 5c each on orders up to 100; 200 for \$7.50; rates for larger orders on request. Address: *South Today*, Clayton, Georgia. This is a Must for CG readers who are looking for suggestions on how to translate their interracial goodwill into action. While the article is directed primarily at a southern audience, the specific “things to do” suggested by Miss Smith are just as sound elsewhere in the country. They range from the “simple, undramatic things we all can do” to those that require “more im-

agination, more energy, and more time”; and they culminate in the areas for the few—areas that “call for courage and wisdom, self-control, skill, vision.”

WITH ITS MAIN OBJECTIVE the mobilization and vocalization of the great numbers of fair-minded persons on the West Coast, the Pacific Coast Committee on American Principles and Fair Play came into being in February, 1942, following the evacuation of persons of Japanese ancestry from the Western Defense Command. A small group, including President Robert Gordon Sproul of the University of California, Chester Rowell of the *San Francisco Chronicle*, General David P. Barrows, U.S.A. retired, Galen Fisher, Christian lay leader, Dr. Henry Francis Grady, former Assistant Secretary of State, and several others, drew up a tentative statement of policy upon which such a group might be organized. Then additional leadership, drawn almost equally from the fields of education, labor, religion, and industry was secured, with representation largely from California, though as the organization grew advisory members from the states of Washington and Oregon were added. While headquarters are in San Francisco (Mrs. Ruth W. Kingman, executive secretary, 465 California Street), branch groups were formed in Santa Barbara, Pasadena, Fresno, Palos Verdes, Sacramento, Seattle, and Portland. Interpretive and educational materials are distributed, mis-statements in the press corrected, speakers supplied, legislators and community leaders interviewed. Work has been outlined for suggested sub-committees in various fields: newspaper, legislative, resettlement, radio, co-ordinating, and student.

“Believing as we do that action affect-

ing any racial group, when that action is placed upon a racial basis as the determining factor, can happen to any other such groups," writes Mrs. Kingman, "our Committee is making every effort to differentiate between the unquestioned guilt of the Japanese war machine and our own people who have Japanese faces. We wish to make war upon Japan and Germany, not upon our loyal citizens whose ancestors came from Japan and Germany. We are concerned that what we do in this regard shall not militate against us in the eyes of our non-white allies, either now or in the postwar period. We are keenly aware that use is being made through Japanese propaganda in China, of our treatment of one of our own ethnic groups. We deplore this and are taking all possible means of calling this danger to the attention of our state and Congressional legislators." The Committee is backing the resettlement program of the WRA and the opening of the armed forces to loyal Americans of Japanese ancestry. It feels that "an alignment with the thinking which maintains a national rather than a sectional point of view is the only effective means of combatting the local, prejudiced, and often hysterical stand of organizations which are taking extreme and racist positions."

OUT OF THE DESIRE of a group of Negro youngsters in Kansas City to get to know a group of Jewish boys this spring, a meeting of Gentile (white and colored) and Jewish young people was called. An interracial, inter-faith organization resulted which has named itself "Common Ground: Kansas City Youth Round Table." It is pledged to fight with all its strength "for the lasting victory of justice and peace; to work toward an improvement of present conditions so as to fulfill the pledge that all men, being created equal, are entitled to equal opportunities;

and to share convictions and insights with other young people and the community." One meeting has been devoted to the Negro problem, one to juvenile delinquency, one to the Jews and anti-Semitism. The Fourth of July program, which was to be semi-artistic, with an interracial chorus, a play, "Jefferson Is Alive," and a few motion pictures, ended in a serious discussion of the recent race riots and an appeal to the authorities to make the community more widely conscious of the fact that "anyone spreading disunity and prejudice among Americans of different colors and creeds is opposing the best traditions of American history, is defying Americans fighting for justice and right, here and abroad, and is threatening the future of that America which we love and for which we are willing to live and to die. . . ." Members have corresponded with their Congressmen on the anti-poll tax bill, have seen the City Welfare and Recreation Departments and the Council of Social Agencies in the city in regard to juvenile delinquency, and in many ways have assumed adult citizenship obligations.

AN INTERESTING ACTION PROGRAM has been worked out by a disciplined young interracial organization called the Committee of Racial Equality. Popularly known as CORE, it seeks to eliminate racial discrimination through techniques of direct non-violent action.

In public places such as restaurants and amusement places, the CORE technique consists first in seeking service in a mixed group. Various types of discrimination may be encountered: refusal of service; being forcibly ejected; discrimination in food (irregular food—garbage sandwiches, egg shells, etc.—or small portions); or overcharging on the bill. The group is under strong group discipline, having agreed previously on their plan of action.

COMMON GROUND

One person is put in charge since there are always on-the-spot decisions to be made. The group is to act confidently and creatively, under the assumption there will be no trouble in being served; they are to be neatly and quietly dressed, to tip the waitress, to pay the bill regardless of overcharge, though the overcharge is to be called to the attention of the cashier; they are to be observant of the reactions of customers; if no difficulty is encountered, they are encouraged to express appreciation for courteous service. They must be able to absorb possible violence without retaliation, and to talk factually, never vindictively.

If service is refused or is very poor, negotiations are entered into with the manager and are to continue as long as there is reasonable hope of solving the problem that way—from five minutes to several months. If these fail, the group goes into direct non-violent action. This may take the form of leaflet distribution to patrons of the restaurant calling attention to the discriminatory policies employed and the negotiations that have failed, picketing, or an interracial sit-down strike in the place of business. By the latter technique, if Negro members of the group are refused service, the others refuse to touch their food until the management agrees to serve all, regardless of the color of their skin. Enough members participate in such a demonstration so that the restaurant is dominated by quiet, peaceable sit-downers, reading and chatting.

The CORE groups have had recourse to this method in several localities. Police have refused to interfere, since there was no disturbance, and the restaurants have been forced to yield.

The original CORE group organized in Chicago. Others now function in Syracuse, New York City, Colorado Springs, Detroit, and Indianapolis. Young people, they are now banded together in a Na-

tional Federation of Committees of Racial Equality, with headquarters at 6458 Evans Avenue, Chicago, Illinois, James Farmer of New York City, national chairman, and Bernice Fisher of Chicago, national secretary. The groups have accepted a common set of Disciplines and a common Statement of Purpose.

Each Committee refuses to accept racial discrimination in any form, and repudiates violence of word or deed. The local memberships vary from 15 to 100 persons. The National Federation will endeavor to strengthen the already existing groups and build throughout the nation a network of smooth-running, hard-hitting little CORES which, with their techniques of direct non-violent action, will make no compromise with racial discrimination and segregation.

A WIDE-RANGE PROJECT for church study in 1943-44, of special interest to CG supporters, has been worked out by the Missionary Education Movement (156 Fifth Avenue, New York City, 10) on "The Church and America's People." Twice a year the Board of Managers of the organization—106 representatives from 51 boards of 26 Protestant denominations and interdenominational agencies—meets to choose and plan for the presentation of future themes of study for their constituent churches. The organization publishes its own educational materials for these projects under the imprint of the Friendship Press.

A series of books, graded from the primary age-level to the adult, has been prepared for this year's study groups. Among these are *We Who Are America* by Kenneth D. Miller, a study of the backgrounds of the immigrants and the second and third generations, and a consideration of the task of the church in creating a genuine unity of all Americans (cloth \$1; paper 60 cents); *Strangers No Longer* by Annie B. Kerr, thirteen stories from the

MISCELLANY

author's long experience among the foreign-born of our cities (cloth \$1; paper 60 cents); *Together We Build America* by John R. Scottford, a pictorial pamphlet interpreting the religious heritages of America's peoples (paper 25 cents); *Strong as the People* by Emily Parker Simon, a book for senior high school readers presenting the backgrounds of the people who have come to America from many parts of the world, with an interpretation of their social and religious life and the problems they face here (cloth \$1; paper 60 cents); *Fun and Festival Among America's Peoples* by Katherine F. Rohrbough, a collection of folk songs, games, recipes, and other festival ideas, useful with groups of all ages (paper 25 cents); *United We Grow* by Thelma D. Diener, an expanded program course for junior high school groups showing how America has grown through the gifts of many groups and pointing out some next steps in the building of a united country (paper 50 cents); *Tommy Two-Wheels* by Robert N. McLean, and *The Pigtail Twins* by Anne M. Halladay (cloth \$1; paper 60 cents each), story books for children.

These are supplemented by a special edition of *From Many Lands* by Louis Adamic (cloth \$2); guides for the use of the leader in conducting study and discussion groups; maps and other visual aids. All are available either from denominational bookstores or from the Friendship Press at 156 Fifth Avenue, New York City (10).

"These materials," writes Franklin D. Cogswell, secretary and editor of the education division of the organization, "are presented with the hope that they will help to create that unity of Americans which cannot be made by laws and statesmen alone—a unity which comes about only when there is friendliness and mutual understanding among those who live on opposite sides of the tracks, at opposite

ends of the town. The creation of this friendliness, this understanding, is a responsibility of every man, woman, and child of the church, to promote a peace at home which will contribute to peace throughout the world."

IN A UNANIMOUS RULING that wage classifications based solely on differences in race were invalid, the War Labor Board in June ordered abolition of pay differentials between white and Negro workers performing equal work. The unanimous opinion was written by Dr. Frank P. Graham of the WLB, president of the University of North Carolina. It is one of the best affirmations of living democracy the times have produced. It runs in part:

"This equalization of economic opportunity is not a violation of the sound American provisions of differentials in pay for differences in skill. It is rather a bit of realization of the no less sound American principle of equal pay for equal work as one of those equal rights in the promise of American democracy regardless of color, race, sex, religion or national origin. . . .

"Economic and political discrimination on account of race or creed is in line with the Nazi program. America, in the days of its infant weakness the haven of heretics and the oppressed of all races, must not in the days of its power become the stronghold of bigots. The world has given America the vigor and variety of its differences. America should protect and enrich its differences for the sake of America and the world. Understanding religious and racial differences makes for a better understanding of other differences and for an appreciation of the sacredness of human personality, as a basic to human freedom. The American answer to differences in color and creed is not a concentration camp but co-operation. The answer to human error is

COMMON GROUND

not terror but light and liberty under the moral law. . . .

"Whether as vigorous fighting men or for production of food and munitions, America needs the Negro; the Negro needs the equal opportunity to work and fight. The Negro is necessary for winning the war, and, at the same time, is a test of our sincerity in the cause for which we are fighting. More hundreds of millions of colored people are involved in the outcome of this war than the combined populations of the Axis Powers. Under Hitler and his Master Race, their movement is backward to slavery and despair. In America, the colored people have the freedom to struggle for freedom. With the victory of the democracies, the human destiny is toward freedom, hope, equality of opportunity and the gradual fulfillment for all peoples of the noblest aspirations of the brothers of men and the sons of God, without regard to color or creed, region or race, in the world neighborhood of human brotherhood."

AFTER THE RIOTS the Public Library in Detroit took a positive step in the direction of better race relations by publishing a leaflet of quotations from people like Franz Boas, Abraham Lincoln, and Wendell Willkie on living democracy and the myth of racial supremacy. "The events of the week of June 20th," the leaflet points out, "charge every one of us with the responsibility of examining our own beliefs, conduct and expressions so that the common effort of all will insure that the unalienable rights of man never again be so trampled." It concludes with a list of recommended reading on the race question, among which we are proud to note COMMON GROUND.

DOCUMENTATION OF DISCRIMINATION against the half million Negroes in the Army is made in a pamphlet published

by the March on Washington Movement (2084 Seventh Avenue, New York City) —"The War's Greatest Scandal! The Story of Jim Crow in Uniform" by Dwight Macdonald. 5 cents a copy.

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON CARVER MEMORIAL BILL became law in July. Through this bill the Missouri birthplace of the famous scientist becomes the first federal memorial to a Negro in this country, perhaps the first national memorial in world history dedicated to peace between the races. The bill won wide support in South and North.

MISS MARIAN SCHIBSBY, for many years associate director of the Common Council for American Unity and author of its "Interpreter Releases," is now Assistant to Earl Harrison, Commissioner of Immigration and Naturalization.

COMMON GROUND readers who have long been keen on Alexander Alland's pictures in its pages will welcome news of his new book, a photographic interpretation of America called *American Counterpoint*, to be published by John Day in September. Pearl Buck has written the introduction.

PROGRAMS WILL RESUME at the American Common, 40 East 40th Street, New York City, the early part of October. Members of the Common Council and subscribers to COMMON GROUND living in the metropolitan area will receive the regular announcement of programs. Others will be placed on the mailing list on request.

WITH THIS ISSUE, COMMON GROUND goes onto a lighter weight paper stock to comply with government restrictions and still allow for an increasing subscription list.

• From the Immigrant and Negro Press •

THE NEGRO PRESS ON THE RIOTS

AND now they know. For Los Angeles, Mobile, Beaumont, and Detroit have spoken more eloquently than all the high-sounding, vainglorious words about the four freedoms and liberty and equality that since Pearl Harbor have been shouted from these shores. The millions of India know and the brown people of the Southwest Pacific know and the blacks of Africa know that America's protestations of democracy are as sounding brass and tinkling cymbals, and that oppression and persecution because of race and color may be found not only under the swastika of Nazi Germany but under the Stars and Stripes. And they will have a clearer idea of the perspective which America will bring to the peace table and to the aspirations for freedom and equality of the non-white peoples of the world.

"We who are American citizens of African descent, we didn't lose at Detroit as much as America lost. It is true that the number of our dead and dying is greater by far than that of our attackers who were evidently aided and abetted by officers of the law sworn to protect the lives and property of the citizens no matter what their race or color. But we lost no prestige; we lost no respect; we lost no honor. But America lost and the measure of her loss is incalculable. For to the ends of the earth wherever there are men and women who are oppressed and who yearn for freedom, wherever there are those who possess skins that are dark, and they are numbered in countless millions, the luster of America's name will be tarnished and faith in the American democracy will begin to ebb. For what can America tell Great Britain of India! And how can Americans condemn the ruthlessness of

Japan. America, which sprinkles the pavements of her cities with the blood of citizens whose only offense is the color of their skin. . . ."—*Elmer A. Carter, syndicated columnist in the Baltimore Afro-American, and other papers, July 10.*

"Detroit, which provided almost the perfect racial tensions in action, has given the Negro worker the true picture of what he is up against. He must realize, if he did not do so before, that he is quite alone in his struggle when the chips are down. Of the thirty-one who died in Detroit, twenty-six were Negroes. Of the more than seven hundred injured, the vast majority were Negroes. Negroes were the ones whole-saled to jail. A Negro community of 160,000, in a city of two million, found itself battered by the mob AND THE POLICE. . . . What were the police doing when Negroes were being beaten in the Negro district? Arresting Negroes. What were the police doing when street cars were stopped by the mob and Negroes mobbed and beaten? They were arresting Negroes. What were the police doing when automobiles bearing Negroes were stopped, turned over and demolished and their occupants beaten? They were arresting Negroes. It is crystal clear that in no American community is the police power going to be used against the majority from which the mob comes to protect the minority from which the victims come. That much Negroes ought to face."—*P. L. Prattis, Pittsburgh Courier, July 3.*

"In Detroit there was no riot in the sense of fatalities. There was a massacre of Negroes by the Detroit police. This is the fact that sticks out above all other

COMMON GROUND

facts in the terrible orgy of June 20-22. . . . It is not fighting white folks that makes Negroes bitter after a riot such as occurred in Detroit. It is not the terrible clubbings suffered at the hands of white mobsters. . . . The bitter thing is the knowledge that EVERYBODY, including the police, turns against them when a fight breaks out. . . . Nothing has been settled except that the conviction has been fastened more firmly in the minds of colored people that they cannot expect protection from the regular authorities and they must 'go for themselves' in case of trouble. This frame of mind breeds more trouble."—Roy Wilkins, *New York Amsterdam News*, July 3.

"Just as long as this country tries to maintain a dual status of citizenship for Negroes and whites, and at the same time keeps preaching a false theory of equality, it will continue to have recurring race riots, lynchings, murders and lesser disturbances on its hands. Either Negroes are citizens and are entitled to all the rights guaranteed all other citizens, or they are not citizens and have no rights in law or equity, except that which is given through the mercy of the majority.

"Certainly it would be embarrassing and world-shaking for the United States to announce to the world that it doesn't consider its Negro residents full citizens entitled to all privileges and opportunities and protection granted American citizens under the law. But for the sake of harmony and unity the United States must face this issue squarely and frankly, and the Negro as a group, too, must face it, discuss it, and seek the answer. If the Negro is a citizen, then it is up to the government of the United States to see to it that he is treated like all other citizens. . . ."—Julius J. Adams, *New York Amsterdam News*, July 3.

"Talk of these pogroms being Axis-inspired is nonsense. What difference is

there between the present pogroms and those of a generation ago when there was no Axis? Did Hitler and Goebbels sponsor the Elaine, Arkansas, massacre or the shambles in East St. Louis? Did Admiral Nomura or General Tojo start off the pogroms in Washington, D.C., Chicago, Ill., or Tulsa, Oklahoma? Was the Gestapo or the Ovra responsible for the blow torch murders at Duck Hill, Miss., or the hundreds of lynchings since the world was made safe for democracy the first time? . . .

"There is much talk of arresting guilty parties and affixing blame, but one wonders whether the REAL culprits, the intellectual authors of these pogroms will ever be arrested. I am afraid not. We know in a general way who did the shooting, beating and burning, but where did they get the IDEA to do it? Why did they think they were justified in doing it? Why do they feel as they do about Negroes? When you answer those questions you know who is REALLY guilty.

"Who has made racial segregation and discrimination our 'American way of life'? Obviously, the industrialists and merchants who have insisted upon jim crowism in their businesses; the newspaper publishers who have systematically poisoned the public minds with Negrophobia; the motion picture producers who have internationally maligned and disparaged colored people for 40 years; the so-called Christian church which has mocked Christianity by promoting and maintaining the color bar; the U.S. Supreme Court which has perverted the Constitution by blessing segregation, disfranchisement and humiliation under the cloak of States' Rights; the Federal Government which has carefully carried out the Ku Klux segregation pattern in almost all activities under its jurisdiction, and finally the so-called educators who have systematically produced textbooks which made future pogroms unavoidable.

"We and our organizations must bear

some of the blame, too. There was too little or no understanding of the forces arrayed against us and what strategy and tactics we should pursue. We have wasted time appealing to the goodwill of the very people who were creating the mental state that precedes pogroms! We have wasted time and money telling each other what is wrong and hurling appeals and denunciations in all directions whenever we were stepped on. We have held big mass meetings, conferences and demonstrations, but to what end? After these years of effort, are race relations any better? Must we not judge a tactic by its success?

"The masses' minds have been left to our enemies, and yet we are outraged when mass action burns down a ghetto and takes scores of lives. Although our future existence depends upon the goodwill of the white masses, we have done almost nothing to increase their goodwill, to expand their knowledge and understanding, to deepen their tolerance. One looks in vain for any intelligent pro-Negro propaganda which can or is intended to reach the white mass mind, and yet we are astonished that pogroms take place. We have been asleep, and that's all there is to it."—George Schuyler, *Pittsburgh Courier*, July 3.

"Certainly we who have been the eternal victims of mob action cannot in this crisis seek to use the instruments of our oppressors to further our cause. The Negro leadership in America stands foursquare on the proposition that our problems must be worked out within the democratic system and without resorting to violence. In the wake of violence, the bitterness between our peoples inevitably deepens and in an atmosphere of mutual hate no lasting goodwill can take root.

"The militant struggle for democracy on our home shores must not be jeopardized by the blind fury of some small minority among ourselves. We must act like

men and not like fools. By the use of the ballot, by the exercise of our democratic right to petition and to protest, the Negro people have made gains in the past and they will make gains in the days ahead. This is no time for a small group among ourselves to destroy a pattern of progress by wild behavior. As this is true for ourselves, it is also true for whites. Nevertheless, we must keep our record clear. As Joe Louis used to say, you cannot expect to win a fight by hitting foul blows, and we Negroes must win the fight for democracy in America, for ourselves and for all peoples regardless of their color, their creed, or their previous condition.—*Editorial, Michigan Chronicle*, August 7.

"I should like to know the national origins of the persons composing these mobs. I feel certain that in addition to the usual poor white (I do not use the term as one of reproach) migrant, there were large numbers of Poles, Hungarians, 'shanty' Irish, and similar groups—peoples seeking freedom in America but who have not yet been accepted as equals by the dominant English-ancestry group. Knowing this fact, the Negro tends to resent the intolerance of these 'foreign' elements much more than that of the native Americans. . . .

"The dominant class in America also brings certain pressures to bear on these alien groups, often rebuffing them as they desperately seek to become unequivocal Americans. In order to overcome their feelings of inferiority and frustration, they too must find some group to 'look down upon.' The Negro is the obvious scapegoat, because his presence here makes all of the other oppressed groups feel superior. It is only natural then that these 'new' Americans should be in the mobs attacking Negroes. The blame is not theirs; they are merely the victims of the American system. . . ."—Arthur P. Davis, *Norfolk Journal and Guide*, July 3.

COMMON GROUND

BEAUMONT TO DETROIT: 1943

Looky here, America
What you done done—
Let things drift
Until the riots come.

Now your policemen
Let the mobs run free.
I reckon you don't care
Nothing about me.

You tell me that hitler
Is a mighty bad man.
I guess he took lessons
From the ku klux klan.

You tell me mussolini's
Got an evil heart.
Well, it mus-a been in Beaumont
That he had his start—

Cause everything that hitler
And mussolini do
Negroes get the same
Treatment from you.

You jim crowed me
Before hitler rose to power—
And you're STILL jim crowing me
Right now, this very hour.

Yet you say we're fighting
For democracy.
Then why don't democracy
Include me?

I ask you this question
Cause I want to know
How long I got to fight
BOTH HITLER—AND JIM CROW.

—Langston Hughes, syndicated by the Associated Negro Press, in New York People's Voice and other papers, July 3.

EPISTLE TO NEGRO SOLDIERS ABROAD

"Your enemy is before you. You must utterly destroy him. Your blows against him must not be weakened by the thoughts of conditions at home. Calmly and confidently you must give your all for victory over fascism. You must understand and recognize in this that you are giving valiant aid to your black brothers and sisters in America.

"You are carrying forward the traditions of Crispus Attucks, of the thousands of black men who fought with George Washington, those who fought with Andrew Jackson at New Orleans. You are the inheritors of the magnificent traditions of struggle left to our country by the hundreds of thousands of Negroes who fought in the Civil War. You are a part of that mighty liberating force of black men who

gave to the world a Toussaint L'Ouverture of Haiti.

"There have been race riots at home. Black men and women have been done to death in the streets of America. But we whom you left behind will fight that battle together with the anti-fascist white Americans who comprise the forces of national unity. Do not be fearful that we will lose. America has known its tories and copperheads before. Its counter-revolutionaries struck the death blow to Lincoln, but slavery was destroyed. The pogrom-makers of America are a part of the hordes of fascism that seek to overrun the world. We will beat them back. They will not destroy American democracy. We will destroy them. Do not fear the result.

FROM THE IMMIGRANT AND NEGRO PRESS

"This war is forging a new America. It is making our country in truth and in deed a melting pot from which all of the progressive forces are emerging as American liberators. America is becoming unified under the hammer blows of war.

"We write you to quiet your alarm. Show this editorial to your white com-

rades in arms even though you are separated from them in jim-crow regiments. Tell them that black America understands its historical role, understands the character of the war, and will give its all for victory over Hitler and Hitlerism and a people's peace."—*Editorial, Chicago Defender, July 10, 1943.*

THE FINNISH IMMIGRANT NYRKKILEHTI

JOHN I. KOLEHMAINEN

ONE of the most typical and ubiquitous and interesting of Finnish immigrant ventures was the handwritten *nyrkkilehti*, the "fist paper." Not one but several of these unpretentious journalistic efforts appeared in every sizable settlement of Finns: the church, the temperance society, the workman's club—each institution had its own inimitable *nyrkkilehti*, bearing an appropriate and euphonious title. There were, for example, the *Vesipoika*—Water Boy—and the *Rauhan Koti*—Home of Peace—of the Ashtabula, Ohio, and Mountain Iron, Minnesota, temperance societies; the *Moukari*—The Sledge—and the *Aatteemme Vesa*—Scion of Our Philosophy—of the Conneaut, Ohio, and Cleveland workingmen's associations. It was, indeed, a rare immigrant group that did not count a *nyrkkilehti* among its most valued possessions.

This parallel rise of handwritten journals among diverse immigrant institutions grew in response to the desire to contribute to the conviviality of social life rather than to advocate specific philosophies of thought or action. To be sure, the element of propaganda was not entirely absent; the editor of the *Fairport*, Ohio, *Vapaa Sana*—Free Speech—for example, was instructed to write about the "funda-

mental principles of the working-class movement" but was advised, in the same breath, to include "humor." Then, too, as socialism, temperance, etc., took on the aspect of overworked themes, the contents of the *nyrkkilehti* became more and more concerned with community gossip, poetry, prose, and humor.

No great formalities attended the preparation of the *nyrkkilehti*, although the Mountain Iron temperance society had a set of by-laws governing its paper, and the Hibbing, Minnesota, group had drafted instructions for its editorial staff in 1906. An editorial board, consisting of one or more and sometimes as many as a dozen members, was appointed to procure the necessary material for an issue. A box was made available for the use of the few individuals who wished to submit unsolicited manuscripts; as it usually turned out, however, the editor was through no choice of his own the sole contributor. When a sufficient quantity of prose or poetry had been received, the editorial board or a select body of censors examined the contributions to see that they were "suitable to be read before the public"; the Virginia, Minnesota, temperance society, however, affirmed vigorously in 1913 that there would be "no censorship." After

COMMON GROUND

considerable pruning and not a few emendations, the copyist—he with a legible hand—was put to work to prepare the master copy. With good fortune and assiduous work, the issue was ready before the deadline was reached, and it was then read by the proud editor. Not infrequently, the “better issues” were sent to neighboring institutions; a copy of the *Conneaut Kilven Kaiku*—Echo of Kilpi—was read in Warren on November 30, 1913.

In the first flush of enthusiasm the production of *nyrkkilehti* was frequent and regular. The Kilpi society decreed in 1903 that its *Kilven Kaiku* should appear once a week; the Mountain Iron society “ordered” its journal to come out “at least once monthly with eight pages or more to an issue.” When the Fairport *Kasvitar*—Growth—was started in June, 1901, it ran twenty-five consecutive issues without a lapse. But before long, as the novelty wore off, the *nyrkkilehti* appeared less and less frequently. At Virginia, for example, a *nyrkkilehti* had been started on August 14, 1910; by November 8, 1912, a member was inquiring whether the society had ever issued a paper and proposed that one be started.

Two main difficulties interfered with the production of the *nyrkkilehti*, in addition to the labor of preparing the copy: the refusal of the rank and file to contribute articles and the unwillingness of individuals to assume the toil which an editorship involved. The operation of the latter factor was vividly demonstrated by developments in 1904 in the Mountain Iron temperance society. On February 7, four editors were selected and a new hand-

written paper, the *Taistelulu*—The Struggle—was launched; on April 10 the *nyrkkilehti* was not read as “all the editors were absent”; on April 17 the society attempted to elect a new editor, but since no one was willing to accept the position, the old editors were reinstated; on June 12 the society decided to drop the venture “until interest again revives.” The Herculean task of finding an editor was similarly experienced by the Kilpi society in November, 1926: “Ah, yes, who is to become editor of the *Kilven Kaiku*? John Näykki? Support to Näykki! Oh, not this time anyway. Well then, Mrs. Rajala? No, no impossible! Mrs. Lindala? I cannot see very well. Olga? No, I have so much work.” Often it happened that, as a result of the absence of editorial recruits, a member was forced to dig deep into a society’s archives to find an old and faded issue, reading this in the hope that it would “pass as a new one.”

While the *nyrkkilehti* has in recent years become somewhat of an oddity, its contributions to immigrant life have been many. Not only did it add to the enjoyment of community life, but it served to unearth and develop talent for writing. The copyists, on the other hand, were given an opportunity to improve and display their style; those chosen to read the finished product before a large and sometimes critical audience received excellent training in declamation. In truth, the *nyrkkilehti* has exerted an influence far greater than its unprepossessing appearance might suggest.

John I. Kolehmainen is on the faculty of Heidelberg College, Tiffin, Ohio.

• The Bookshelf •

CONDUCTED BY HENRY C. TRACY

NEW WORLD A-COMING

NEW WORLD A-COMING: *Inside Black America.* By Roi Ottley. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. 364 pp. \$3. A *Life-in-America Prize Book*.

This is a book about Negroes "seeking a way out of the impasse of Negro life," searching for democracy. While its emphasis is on Harlem as the Capital of Black America, it probes also into the wider patterns of Negro thought and action. It has much for those who read casually, and even more for Americans who are deeply concerned about the tensions that have lately had overt expression and have brought tragic headlines to our papers. Roi Ottley is already familiar to CG readers for his sane and courageous point of view, and his book should be of wide interest to them.

Much of it focuses on and around personalities, but always in their relation to the whole scene, to broad social and sociological factors. Differing as Negroes do on minor issues, "on the question of their rights—moral, economic, and political—which to them mean the right to integration in American life, they form a solid bloc, each member of it being fiercely group-conscious." This struggle for integration is the underlying and unifying theme in chapters as diverse as those on the early history of Harlem, Joe Louis, the Negro's ballot, and Executive Order 8802. The Negro, says Mr. Ottley, wants a "democracy—cleansed and refreshed," one he can "feel, see, and smell. . . . He is against fascism, finally and inexorably, both at home and abroad. For few men understand its dangers better than he. Its

lash has already cut him deeply, savagely. . . . In spite of vocal opposition, Negroes have hope. For they have an abiding faith in the eventual rightness of things. When they sing ' . . . on solid rock I stand!' this is no illusion, for the foundation of their aspirations comes directly from the nation's great promise contained in its Constitution."

This is an important book, published at a critical time.

We have in *The Fighting South* by John Temple Graves (Putnam. \$2.75) both a defense and an interpretation. The book deals with manners and morals, with the reasons why we have a South that led in voluntary enlistments in the war for human liberties. We have also an illuminating glimpse of the contradictory thinking that limits that war for human liberties to the world beyond the colored South. Says Mr. Graves: "They [Negroes] said that America must prove the democracy for which it was asking its people to fight abroad by making it complete at home. In the circumstances, however, they might as logically have said that because America's house was on fire America must take the occasion for renovating the kitchen or putting Venetian blinds in the parlor." The limitations of this figure are the limitations of the book. There is little real understanding of the futility of helping to put out the world conflagration—magnificent a gesture of "chivalry" as it is—while we ignore the sparks of dissatisfaction and oppression that may set fire to our own domestic civilization.

Robert Frost, all unknowingly, reviewed

COMMON GROUND

Mr. Graves' book long before it was written:

"Before I built a wall [he said] I'd
ask to know
What I was walling in or walling out,
And to whom I was like to give of-
fence.
Something there is that doesn't love
a wall,
That wants it down. . . .
He [Mr. Graves] moves in darkness
as it seems to me,
Not of woods only and the shade of
trees.
He will not go behind his father's
saying,
And he likes having thought of it so
well
He says again, 'Good fences make
good neighbours.'"

Bernard DeVoto's *The Year of Decision: 1846* (Little, Brown. \$3.50) is a prose epic, a dramatization of the experience of North American folk as national experience. In that year, the energy and determination of single men or of men in masses, variously moved, but with a common will to expand, determined the boundaries of this Republic and pushed its frontiers to the Pacific. 530 pages of interlocking detail of lives, personalities, action, diplomacy, mass movements and migrations, political bickerings and social philosophies. A reader may elect to follow the fortunes of one person or movement, with the aid of a dependable index, and so gain a clear picture of that detail in its larger setting.

In *Citizen Tom Paine* (Duell, Sloan and Pearce. \$2.75) Howard Fast draws for us in stirring, swift-paced prose, a compelling portrait of the great "professional revolutionist" whose "country was where freedom was not." Paine emerges from these pages a tragic, courageous figure, of tough moral fiber, loving all men. That all men should be free was his stead-

fast purpose; revolution, his technique; his "Common Sense" and "The Rights of Man," the brands that set the fires of rebellion in America, England, and France. An exciting and important book.

Irving Stone's *They Also Ran* (Doubleday, Doran. \$3.50) analyzes the careers of nineteen prominent Americans who ran for the Presidency but failed to be elected. Beyond this analysis the book is also valuable in revealing the mind of the people who failed to elect these persons and sometimes chose men far less fitted for the office than those who were rejected at the polls. The book gains added interest from its handling of the case of Wendell Willkie, still a Presidential possibility.

Pearl S. Buck in *What America Means to Me* (John Day. \$2) outlines the terms of a loyalty that includes all the varied peoples and races who now make this country what it is, and includes also the peoples of the world beyond our borders. She does not hesitate to describe race prejudice as disloyalty to America. Collected here are addresses and writings that forecast a coming renaissance, the greatest yet known, and requiring the widest cooperation among peoples. Inspiring, corrective, invigorating.

Our *Fighting Faith* by James Bryant Conant (Harvard University Press. \$1.25) may win wider attention than such a volume would ordinarily command, because of the interest stirred by this Harvard President's article in the May *Atlantic*, "Wanted: American Radicals," and its discussion from coast to coast. Differing in content, this series is inspired by the same insistence on basic qualities—integrity and excellence—which Dr. Conant regards as native to American idealism. The loyalty he commends is toward these. A classless society in which the only aristocracy is that of integrity of character and excellence of performance would stem from our best traditions, he contends.

THE BOOKSHELF

History of Bigotry in the United States by Gustavus Myers (Random House. \$3.50) is the fruit of seventeen years work by an author who died before its publication. It traces the sources of racial and religious intolerance to their roots and describes the activities of anti-democratic organizations formed to keep such hatreds alive. An exhaustive inquiry.

The Negro's Share by Richard Sterner (Harper. \$4.50) is another volume in the

series of studies on the Negro in America sponsored by the Carnegie Corporation under the editorship of Dr. Gunnar Myrdal. It concerns itself with the Negro's share in economic opportunities in the United States. What is his standard of living? What should it be? Written by a Swedish economist distinguished in his own land for similar research, this is an unbiased report by an expert, well tabulated throughout.

FOR A FREE WORLD

Recent public papers by Henry A. Wallace appear in one slim volume, *The Century of the Common Man* (Reynal and Hitchcock. Paper 75c; cloth \$1.50). They present a singularly consistent whole, unfolding a sane and far-seeing view. It is no politician who speaks here; it is an American in the best sense, who knows the world of the future is inevitably one.

A volume of addresses by Sumner Welles, *The World of the Four Freedoms* (Columbia University Press. \$1.75) contains twelve presentations of a world view for the Americas. They show clearly how one American grasped the significance of the shattering events between 1939 and the present, and indicate the best means of uniting the twenty-one American republics in one common cause—world freedom.

Harold J. Laski's *Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time* (Viking. \$3.50) is a searching analysis of the social and economic issues of the day—of the drive to fundamental change which growth of our civilization imposes; of an adjustment too long postponed, and the rise of fascist dictators that has resulted; of threats to privilege induced by democratic demands for the fulfillment of pledges; of the Russian experiment; of British labor become

articulate; and of freedom in a planned society. The chance that we may differ from Mr. Laski's conclusions must not blind us to the luminous quality of his work. That we are "in the midst of the profoundest crisis our civilization has known since the Reformation, and perhaps since the fall of the Roman Empire," no one can deny. Into the nature of this crisis, the book sends a penetrating light.

Harry Paxton Howard in *America's Role in Asia* (Howell, Soskin. \$3) unravels the complicated and bewildering story of China's emergence from exploitation, revolution, internal turbulence, and threat from ruthless aggressors, into the status of (save for a Chinese Quisling and his dupes) a united nation. Its people have for a generation fought for freedom, and, to the vast discredit of Europe and America, have not been helped in time to avert tragic disasters. This book appeals for effective help now, and for immediate ending of that inconsistent practice by which we exclude the Chinese on a racial basis, and declare them unfit for citizenship in America. A section of the volume is devoted to Japan and Korea, and there is also a clarifying chapter on India.

Lin Yutang's *Between Tears and Laughter* (John Day. \$2.50) is a stinging man-

COMMON GROUND

ifesto against further Europeanization of the world (implicit in the plans of some Allied leaders) and an assertion of the emergence of Asia as the great fact of the Second World War. It is a declaration of the right of China, of India, of lesser lands variously subjugated, to be free, and a warning of their approaching power to claim and hold what is theirs. Basically, these frank and fearless assertions are a broadening of Lincoln's affirmation: the world cannot exist half slave and half free. Here too is a valid rebuke to those statesmen who think they can ignore faith, and the "imponderables," loss of which has already brought about the crash of the European world.

Liberty of spiritual faith must be a concern of the Four Freedoms. Among other current books on this theme is Dwight J. Bradley's *Freedom of the Soul* (Association Press. \$1.50) which deals with deflec-

tions of the religious instincts under economic and social pressures, false substitutes offered by fascism, and that inner freedom which can be developed only where the value of the individual is truly appraised. Israel Herbert Levinthal's *A New World Is Born* (Funk and Wagnalls. \$2.50) is a collection of wise discourses designed to draw Jewish institutions and practice into line with the changes of our time and the urgent necessities of our day.

Reinhold Niebuhr's *The Nature and Destiny of Man* (Scribner's. \$2.75) demonstrates that theological thinking has direct bearing on life's realities; that stubborn knots are disentangled by it; that the web of history can be shaken out in such fashion that man's destiny appears emergent—we are no longer the hopeless victims of a net of circumstance from which there is no escape.

THE LAND AND ITS PEOPLE

The range of character among actors in the evolving American drama is the greatest on earth. In *Kansas Irish* by Charles B. Driscoll (Macmillan. \$2.50) we come to focus on "Big Flurry" (the author's father), a giant Irishman from County Cork, who left his fishing to join the horde who in the late 1800s came to help make America. This is his life, and with it the saga of a lusty, lively, Kansas farm family, told with humor and candor.

While families like this lived and worked in sun and wind the country over, men of other families went underground to bring out the wealth the nation needed to spread its rails and power its industries. Little of this wealth, far less than they earned, went into the pockets of these men or eased the plight of their families.

How they relieved the drabness of their lives or found release for their emotions, George Korson tells in his *Coal Dust on the Fiddle* (University of Pennsylvania Press. \$3.50). Here are transcripts of their songs, stories, and social gatherings. Korson, who knows this field well, pays tribute to the "hospitality and graciousness of these backwoods coal miners once their confidence was won."

Somewhat late in the day of social awakening, but not too late, a near-Boston family—the one to which Louise Randall Pierson belonged, as she tells in *Roughly Speaking* (Simon and Schuster. \$2.50)—learned that wealth may disappear overnight and with it the privilege of seeming better than one's neighbors; and that thereafter one must learn to live by one's

THE BOOKSHELF

own efforts, even though the process seems to old-time upper-crust friends radical and even disgusting. With an innate bent for swimming upstream and flouting the conventions, the author tells her story with verve, gaiety, and humor reminiscent of Cornelia Otis Skinner.

Two Maine books present different angles. *Village Down East* by John Wallace (Stephen Daye. \$3) is a sketch book of characters and scenes drawn from the author's life-time impression of the folk he grew up with as a boy, with stories in the idiom of one of them. These folk are old-timers, the scenes rustic in the extreme and the humor "country." For *The Maine Idea* (Harcourt, Brace. \$2.50) Keith Jennison has arranged eighty-seven photographs of rare distinction, with "stories" of no more than a line or two, or half a sentence, but adequate as they are apt. Open where you will, these full-page pictures leave an impression either of spacious beauty or of human personality, rugged, humor-loving and shrewd. The humor comes in a native vein, like gold, good anywhere, any time, and made (we suspect) only in Maine.

New England Town Meeting by John

Gould (Stephen Daye. \$1) is brief, competent reportage by picture and text of an institution by the aid of which Americans first made their democratic ideas effective—and still do.

Shifting to the Northwest, Eva Green-slit Anderson in *Chief Seattle* (Caxton Printers. \$4) portrays the life of a Puget Sound Indian whose great endeavor was to bridge the gap between the incoming white men and his own people, in the years when misunderstandings were many and mediators were few.

A survey of still another section of the country, *Man and Resources in the Middle Rio Grande Valley*, by Allan G. Harper, Andrew R. Cordova and Kalervo Oberg (University of New Mexico Press. \$2.25) presents a clear, documented account of a tri-cultural society—Indian, Spanish, and Anglo—living together as best they may in a New Mexico that once easily supported a small, stable population, but now suffers from tendencies brought in with the Anglo, proverbially heedless of the natural capacities of the land. Admirably illustrated with photographs depicting every phase of the problem now faced.

THE OTHER AMERICAS

With the appearance of Edward Tomlinson's *The Other Americas* (Scribners. \$3), we note a change in method and content in books dealing with the twenty republics south of us. For two years we have read, in a constant stream of excellent publications, of their history, geography, social progress, their economic and political problems. Now we have a more intimate approach, sharper focus, and emphasis on special features. Thus Mr. Tomlinson, while he touches on historic back-

grounds, does so in order to provide the setting for a series of vivid scenes in which he gives us today's living picture. These cover all the countries in a new grouping: "Island America"—the Dominican Republic, Haiti, and Cuba; "Mexican America"; "Middle America"—Guatemala to Costa Rica; "Vespucci's America"—Panama, Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia; "Temperate America"—Chile, Argentina, Paraguay, Uruguay; and "Brazilian America." The book is en-

COMMON GROUND

riched with striking photographic illustrations.

Albert Franklin, known for his research work under the Carnegie Foundation, has chosen to devote his gifts in writing Ecuador (Doubleday Doran. \$3.50) not to dry or technical lore but to the life-stream as it flows along Andean trails, as it gathers in cities, plies the rivers and the roads, works the mines, congregates in churches or the market-place, and gathers in social-intellectual groups for self-improvement. Nothing yet published has brought us quite so near to the people of that land. *The Amazon* by Caryl P. Haskins (Doubleday Doran. \$4) acquaints us with the broad reaches of a river and a drainage basin in which vast resources bearing on the future of this hemisphere lie hidden; acquaints us too with the movement of peoples who since the dawn of history lived, fought, explored and exploited, yet have barely tapped those resources. The latter chapters deal with the six nations whose political control reaches over some part of the Amazonian basin, and with the New Doctrine of the Amer-

ica's in which the destiny of the continent blends with that of the world's mightiest river. Every page is absorbing and the whole story fascinating.

José Jobim, author of *Brazil in the Making* (Macmillan. \$3.50), is an economist. His account of the successive cycles of production through which the country has passed since first colonized—the sugar, coffee, and rubber cycles etc., a “diversification cycle”—is particularly valuable, as introductory to a study of the national economy, which now shows swift adaptation to war conditions as well as a rapid industrialization, normal to a vigorously developing country. Senhor Jobim is now secretary to the Co-ordinator of Economic Mobilization for Brazil, in Rio de Janeiro.

The co-authors of *The Wind That Swept Mexico* (Harper. \$3.75)—Anita Brenner and George R. Leighton—have made it a strikingly novel and arresting story of the Mexican revolution—1910 to 1942—the former in boldly candid prose, the latter in a series of historical photographs, with brief explanatory text for each full-page illustration.

FICTION IN BRIEF

The well-linked stories Rose C. Feld writes about *Sophie Halenczik*, *American* (Little, Brown. \$2) are a tonic and a joy. Sophie is an American in the deepest and richest sense of that word, for all her accent and her Czech descent. She hires out as a domestic, wins the admiration of her employers, then of the whole town, doing remarkable and even heroic things without ever being aware that she is doing them. A tonic for war-time readers. *Till I Come Back to You*, by Thomas Bell (Little, Brown. \$2) reads like a light book but is not. The hero, about to leave his

girl for the Army, had just one ambition prior to enlisting: to find a place where he could feel at home. In a swift Sunday afternoon he sees that there never will be such a place—for him or anyone else—unless we make it. George F. Hummel in *Joshua Moore* (Doubleday Doran. \$2.75) writes of English colonists in their first contacts as settlers in America, of their sons and successive generations, with ever-broadening interweavings with the world-stream of many nationalities until the present time. A panoramic novel of many scenes.

"I would be willing to sell BROTHERS UNDER THE SKIN on street corners or house to house. I have no other words for the enthusiasm and gratitude I feel."

—Louis Adamic

\$3.00

BROTHERS UNDER THE SKIN

by Carey McWilliams

"Indispensable to a full understanding of the history and present status of the problem of minority peoples."

—*New Republic*

LITTLE, BROWN & CO. • BOSTON

One, Two, Three!

With this issue *COMMON GROUND* begins its 4th volume. Back numbers of the first three volumes (Autumn 1940 through Summer 1943) are still in print and may be had at special combination prices:

Any three issues, \$1.00 Any four issues, \$1.25

BOUND VOLUMES

With Index

Vol. I, II, or III — \$3 each

Don't take a chance on losing your loose copies of *COMMON GROUND*. Send them to us to be bound in permanent form at \$1.75 per volume.

ORDER DIRECTLY FROM *COMMON GROUND*

222 FOURTH AVENUE, NEW YORK CITY 3

COMMON GROUND Crosses the Pacific . . .

with a U.S. Navy Chaplain

San Francisco, April 5, 1941

"The Spring issue of COMMON GROUND has been received and I like it."

San Francisco, September 4, 1942

"I think COMMON GROUND represents real Americanism. It deserves to be in every Army and Navy library . . . throughout the country and overseas."

c/o Fleet Post Office, February 23, 1943

"COMMON GROUND has not reached me for some time undoubtedly due to your failure to have my new address. This address belongs to an overseas naval unit on an island in the Pacific. . . . COMMON GROUND will mean even more to me now."

c/o Fleet Post Office, June 22, 1943

"This evening I am beginning the first of a series of meetings . . . built around an effort to keep in mind the proper objectives of our fight in this war and its program as it applies to our efforts in this area of the far-flung worldwide battle line. COMMON GROUND will be an important factor and a big help in these programs."

c/o Fleet Post Office, July 11, 1943

"My being a subscriber to COMMON GROUND prompted me to get the assistance of another Chaplain . . . of the Army, to help me organize a Chaplains' Association which would include all the Chaplains on the island and which would arrange programs of interest to the whole community—Americans of the Army, Navy, and Marine Corps, of all racial and national backgrounds. By organizing these events, we hope to succeed in making all Americans realize how dependent we are, one upon the other."



ALEXANDER ALLAND

Playground—New York City



SOL LIBSOHN

*Local 65: United Retail and
Wholesale Workers of America, CIO*



ALEXANDER ALLAND

Public School—New York City



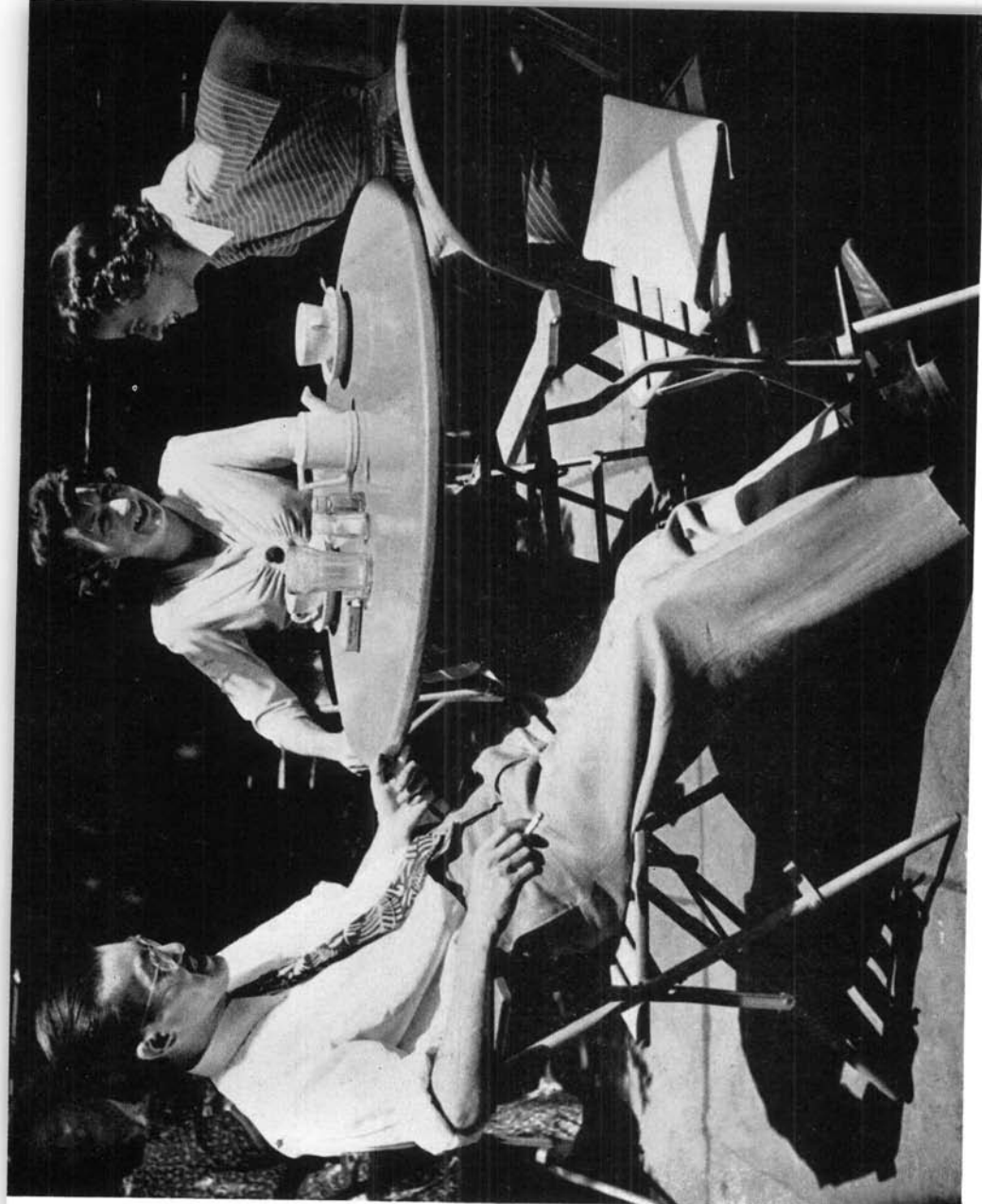
SOL LIBSOHN

*Internes: recreation room—
Harlem Hospital, New York City*



SOL LIBSOHN

Kingsborough Houses—Brooklyn



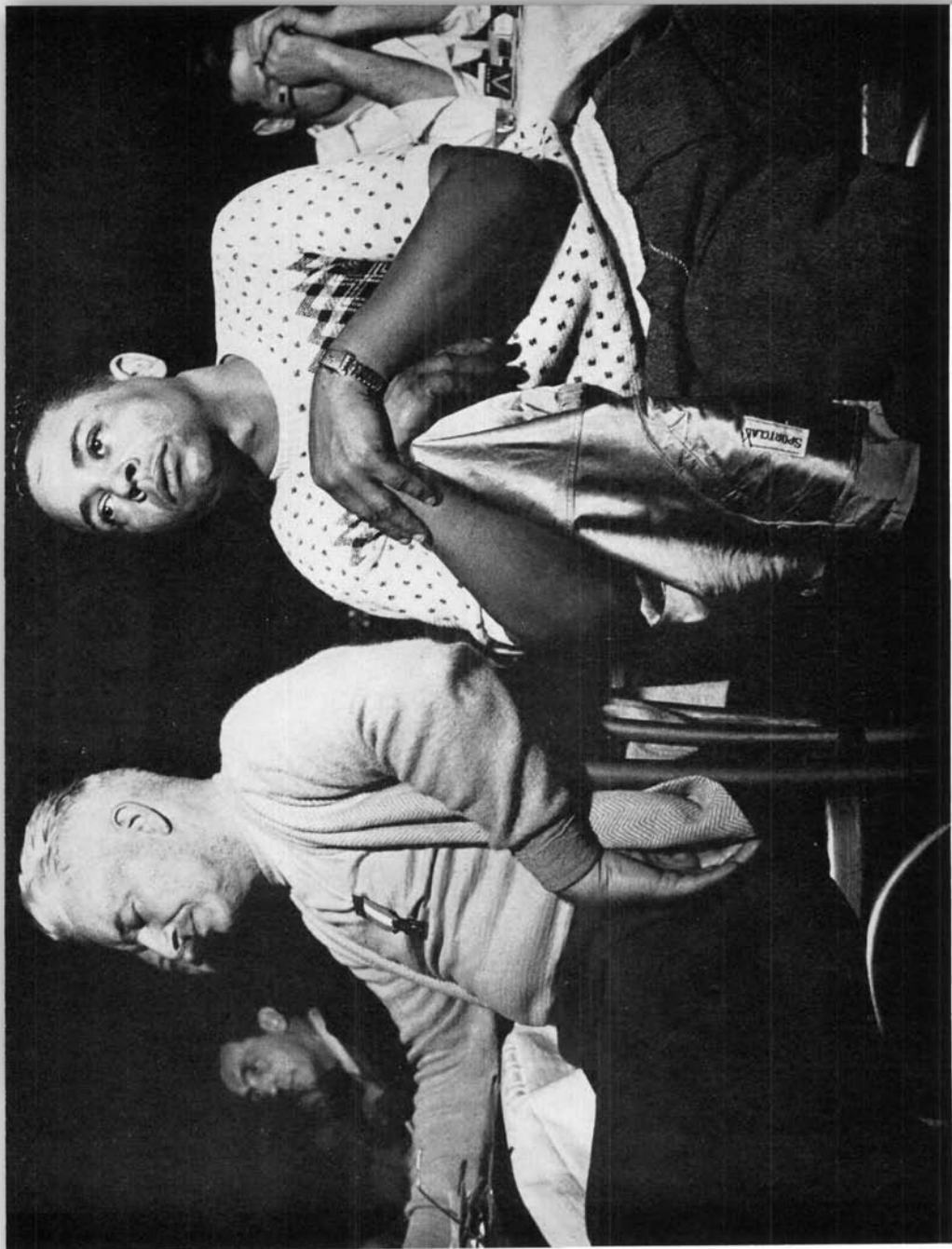
SOL LIBSOHN

*Co-operative Cafeteria—
New York City*



SOL LIBSOHN

Stage Door Canteen—
New York City



SOL LIBSOHN

National Maritime Union Convention